STUDIES IN THE AGAMAS—1

THE SAIVAGAMAS

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THE SAIVAGAMAS

" ஆகமமாகி நின்று
அண்ணிப்பான் தாள் வாழ்க."

— TIRUVACAKAM

PREFACE

The Vedas have always been a source of fascinating study for orientalists of the West. Innumerable are the translations, critical studies and expositions, papers and books written on the Vedas and the Upanishads, and the Advaita philosophy of Sankara. But the Agamas, though they constitute an equally large body of ancient Sanskrit source material for a different concept of the same advaita philosophy of Vedanta, have not been studied by any orientalist; indeed they have not been studied at all or studied in depth even by any Indian scholar except perhaps Dr. Surendranatha Das Gupta (October 1885-December 1952) of Calcutta, even under the great handicap of the grantha script.

The reasons for this neglect are not far to seek. The agamas had existed mostly in South India, in the Tamil nad, in palmleaf manuscript book form in the homes of the Sivacharyas who had been entrusted with the duty of organizing and performing the consecration and the congregational worship (*parartha puja)* in the Siva temples for probably over two millennia and a half. These agamas are not available in North India to the extent they are available in the South, although they had been responsible for the culture of the whole of India. Dr. Das Gupta has stated that 'no agama manuscript of any importance is found even in Banaras, the greatest centre of Hindu religion, Sanskrit studies and culture'.

Besides, all the agama manuscripts are available only in the grantha script, one which had been invented by the Tamil people for writing their Sanskrit scriptures, more than fifteen hundred years ago. There is also a view that tha *grantha* was the script used when the Vedas were reduced to writing and that the new *nagari* script came into vogue when the *Vedic* language gave place to *classical* Sanskrit (Samskrt-well constructed); in other words, grantha script was much earlier than the nagari script. This grantha script was not in use in the north, and the *devanagari* script of the north was unknown in the south till the beginning of the twentieth century.

It is too much to except Western Orientalists first of all to know of the existence of two scripts for Sanskrit, and then to study two scripts for one language; their study was confined to the devanagari script which was in use over a much larger area of India and in the north; hence no wonder the agamas were left out of their ambit of study. Arthur Avalon (Sir John Woodroffe) who happened to be a judge of the Bengal High Court had devoted his whole life to the unearthing and publishing of Sakta tantric works and expounding the Sakta philosophy in the modern English language. Bengal is even today the home of the Sakta cult and naturally he learnt if from the pandits there. Otto Schraeder, a German, had devoted his life to the expounding of the Vaishnava philosophy. This was possible because the Sanskrit texts on the Sakta and Vaishnava systems were made available to them in the *nagari* script. But the Agama texts were not available to any western orientalist in the nagari script with which they had made themselves familiar.

Westerners' studies on oriental subjects centred round Calcutta, the administrative headquarters of the British (the East India company) from the day of their assumption of power, and of the Viceroy and Governor-General, till 1911. Eminent western scholars visited the Viceroy as honoured guests and they were introduced naturally to the Sanskrit language in the devanagari script which was familiar to the Indians i.e. the Bengalis around Calcutta, in the middle of the 19th century. Only the nagari script was known to them; the very existence of the grantha script was unknown in North India. Hence the orientalists could not even know of the existence of some other Sanskrit scriptures in the grantha script.

It has been said that the Upanishads and the Agamas branched off from the same stem, namely the Vedas, and that the two dealt with the theory and the practice of philosophic thought respectively. After Sankara, abstract philosophical studies had become the trend, and the Agamas, which were considered to deal with the practice, i.e. with a theistic philosophy, were relegated to the background. But the Agamas had the greatest revival in the days of the Chola Emperors of Tamilnad, from the 9th century. This was the period immediately after Sankara. The Smarthas who adopted the philosophy of Sankara somehow deemed the agamas to be alien to themselves just because Sankara did not deal with them. The

Agamas deal with *upasana* whereas the original Sankara philosophy did not deal with upasana. Sankara's philosophy was an Absolute Monism while the Saiva philosophy was a Theistic Monism called Qualified Monism; the former did not countenance the latter.

The Agamas very strictly laid down that only the Sivacharya class, the Siva brahmins, were competent to enter the *garbha griha* and perform the worship in the Siva temples and that the brahmin as such (i.e. the *smartha* brahmin) shall not enter the sanctum and shall not touch the Sivalinga or perform the worship. This might also have been another and more important reason for the brahmin antipathy towards the agamas.

A parallel in the domination of the Sanskrit influence of Sanskrit may be noticed in Vaishnavism in the work of Ramanuja. This great acharya who gave his whole life to the establishment of Vaishnavism as a separate and independent cult in Tamilnad, had to contend with Sankara-advaitam. He called his philosophy, visishtadvaita philosophy, one with special features. He worked for the enthronement of the *Nalayira Divya Prabandham*- the Four Thousand divine songs of the Alvar, the Tamil Vaishnava canon, in all temple rituals and in all the Vaishnava domestic rituals also, but yet it is most remarkable and significant that he could not muster courage enough to quote a single line or word from the *Nalayiram* his Tamil veda, in all his disputations such as the *Sri Bhashya*, lest he should lose caste with the Sankara advaitins and his writing be unceremoniously dismissed by the Sankara advaitins as Dravida. This parallel background may well be remembered when speaking of the Saiva Agamas.

But it is only the Saiva religion that held up the torch of Tamil Culture by producing its own original basic scriptures in Tamil, without recourse to Sanskrit through Meykandar in the 12th century, probably just after the passing away of Ramanuja. Further elucidation of this aspect of Saivism is not relevant to the subject taken up.

A distinctive Saiva Advaita philosophy began to take shape from the days of Tirumular and Karaikkal ammaiyar (5th century A.D.). This was given a fresh life and currency and a new direction, in the Tamil language by the Saiva Nayanmar - Sts. Sambandhar

Appar and Sundarar and by Manikkavacakar in the period 7th to the 9th centuries. It flowered into a spate of temple building and temple worship on agamic lines in the centuries 9 to 13. Although the agama study and practice in Sanskrit was now revived, the whole Saiva cult of this period was Tamil-based. The philosophy and work of the Sankara school was Sanskrit-based, and it could not reconcile itself to the new revival in Tamilnad in the Tamil language, although the greatest exponent of this revival, Tiru Jnana Sambandhar, was himself a brahmin. (No brahmin, from the 7th century to the modern day, has named his child Jnanasambandhar because this name, though borne by a brahmin child, smacked of Tamil culture with which the smartha brahmin probably could not reconcile himself). It should be remembered that the smrthis had the greatest authority over the brahmins who were in consequence called the Smarthas; the smiritis had no authority over that Saiva siddhantins. This is also one reason for the neglect of agamic studies in the past although the Saiva books may pay lip service to the smiritis.

Again, the Velalar, otherwise called the Saivas, who were themselves the followers of the agamas, evolved their own philosophic doctrines from the 12th century and called their philosophy also the (Suddha) Advaita Philosophy. By Velalar we designate here the landed cultured class of agriculturists, who were total vegetarians from known periods of history and who were the main stay of all society and of all culture in the mediaeval period. All their original writing in this Saiva philosophy was in Tamil; they called their system the essence of the Vedanta; still they continued to say that they followed the Vedas and their philosophy was that of the Vedasiras, the Upanishads. This irked the Sankara school still more. The Saivas then assailed the Sankara concept of *aham-brahmasmi* and called it *maya vada* and *ekatma vada*. Naturally the cleavage between the two further widened. The Saiva school emphasized temple worship which was not the creed of the Sankara advaitins. The Saivas now took the line of least resistance by limiting themselves to their new Tamil texts alone, ignoring all Sanskrit, unfortunately including the Agamas also. All these attitudes caused the agamas to recede into the background further. But it must be categorically stated that the Saivas do owe allegiance to the Vedas and have a number of Sanskrit texts of scriptural value written through the centuries, besides the Agamas.

The agamas though written in Sanskrit were considered to highlight the Tamil (often called the Dravida) culture and so the Aryan dominated north would not recognise this Dravida culture. But the Tamilians, though they were the most ancient people among the Dravidians and the most ancient people in the whole of Bharat, meekly submitted to the supremacy of the Aryan views and did not boldly champion their own cultural continuity and great uniqueness.

The Sivacharyas also are grievously to blame in this regard. They aped the Vedic or Smartha brahmin in all matters and tried to 'climb' in the ladder of caste, by calling themselves brahmins, although the smartha brahmins refused to recognize their brahminhood; they do not interdine with the Sivacharyas nor do the two inter-marry even to this day. But the agamas emphatically declare that the Sivacharya is far superior to the (mere) brahmin since he is the Siva-brahmin. Siva diksha is the exclusive privilege of the Saivas including the Sivacharyas. Generally the smartha brahmin is not qualified for Siva diksha. Occasionally in the modern day the smartha brahmin comes forward to cook the food offering for the Sivalinga enshrined in the Siva temple (a service which according to the agamas has to be done by the *pachaka* section of the Sivacharyas); in such a case he is given the first siva-diksha (*samaya diksha*) which makes him a Saiva and then he is allowed to cook the food offering Thus by keeping the agamas as their own privileged preserve the Sivacharyas have snuffed out a wider study of the Saivagamas. The agamas in consequence came to perish.

However it should be said to the glory of Saivism that there are yet a few Sivacharyas (but they can be counted on one's fingers) who know the agamas thoroughly and who have the agama texts at their finger tips and could hold their own againt any smartha brahmin in disputation.

The Vedas were the preserve of the elite among the Aryans. They never came down to the level of the common man. Nor did their thoughts and rites reach the common man. On the other hand, the Agamas concerned themselves with all society, with the common man and his needs, both social and spiritual.

However one point has to be re-stated. The general assumption that the agamas deal only with temples and temple worship is

wrong. In the pages that follow, it will be shown that the agamas consist of four parts of which *kriya* dealing with temple construction and rituals is one, and *jnana* dealing with philosophy is another. But because of the emphasis on the kriya part in the newly blossoming cult of Saivism in the days of the Chola Emperors and because of the separate evolution of the jnana part independently in the Tamil language, the agamas had come to be called (of course wrongly) a mere ritualistic code by those who would denigrate the Tamil culture. They are as much philosophic treatises as any other treatises like the Upanishads.

The publication of five agamas Raurava, Ajita, Matanga, one Kalottara and Mrgendra in the nagari script in the recent years by the French Institute of Indology, Pondichery, under the able and dedicated guidance of the late Dr. Filliozat and Professor N.R. Bhat had brought the agamas again into focus. The advanced students of the Universities offering Saiva siddhanta are expected now to have some idea of the agamas and their content, when they study Indian philosophy.

The agamas are encyclopaedic in their treatment of all subjects pertaining to the religious life of the worshipper and tot he temple. A study of the agamas is most valuable for understanding the script ural sanction and regulation for all that the temple stands for, and for helping their upkeep in all their varied religious and cultural aspects.

Time was when every one went about saying that Sanskrit was the deva-bhasha and only a Sanskritic approach can qualify one for worship and evolution in his religious aspirations. But the film that clouded people's understanding has been removed and we can boldly declare that in Tamilnad Tamil can be and is a deva-bhasha, if not the only deva bhasha, and that Tamil can have also Sanskrit as a complement or a handmaid to it as Sanskrit had always been. We are prepared to employ Sanskrit and extoll it but this does not and can not of course be on the suppression of the mother tongue.

We do grant that Saivism, along with Vaishnavism, had grown also through Sanskrit; we would further emphasize that Sanskrit is as much the learned and religious Tamilian's language (though today

he might disown it) as Tamil is, but that does not give Sanskrit the first position or the right to supplant Tamil.

I was induced to write down some thoughts on the agamas in the pages of the *Saiva Siddhanta*, the English journal of the Madras Saiva Siddhanta Maha Samajam. The treatise appearing in this volume was published in the pages of that journal some years back as just a short account of the Saivagamas in a few pages. It is enlarged and published now in book form as the first volume of a series of studies in the Agamas. Treatises on the philosophy of the Agamas, their thoughts on Architecture and Sculpture, on the modes of Worship, and on similar subjects will be issued as further volumes in the series.

This book is divided into Three Sections. The First Section deals with the Agamas in a general way.

The Second deals with the number of the agamas, their availability and printing. A table of the 28 Saivagamas and their Upagamas as detailed in the *Tantravatara patala* of the major agamas and a table of the Printing History of the Agamas(in Tamil nadu) have also been appended here. The *Matangagama* (*vidya pada*) also has been dealt with in the body of the book. Its other three *padas* (not mentioned there) have since been released by the French Institute of Indology at Pondichery after the printing of this book was completed and so a note on these *padas* has been added at page 137.

The Third section deals with the other schools of Saivism, the Sakta agamas, the Vaishnava agamas, the Vira Saiva school and the Advaita school, with a view to make this small book informative on the several aspects of Hinduism today. The Panchayatana puja, very much talked about in the modern day, has a separate note here.

A glossary of the religious terms, and quotations from the Tamil texts in original have also been appended to make the volume more useful. A short bibliography and an index are also there as necessary adjunets to any scientific writing.

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SECTION 1

THE SAIVAGAMAS

The Saiva Agamas

1. INTRODUCTION

The Saiva Agamas are some of the earliest books in the Sanskrit language on the Saiva religion and philosophy, written over a period of several centuries before the Christian era. They represent an independent class of writing by very early seers, who had an inward experience and enlightenment from the Supreme Being, Siva, and who were also perhaps influenced by the Vedas in their original form. It is now recognised that the Vedas as they are available today are only the compilations of Vyasa of a later day and that their original forms are not available; Vyasa–compiler. They had realised in their lives and thoughts the general truths taught by the early Upanishads. So far as Saivism is concerned, these seers have to be considered as hailing from the South and not from the North. But they were essentially representatives of All India and they reflected in their thoughts, modes of meditation and worship, in their writing, and in their very lives, the inherent theism of the South.

The theism of the south or rather, the Saivism of the Tamilians, was the growth of an unbroken tradition probably, from the pre-historic past and this had three elements fused into it. These are an external worship of images as the manifest abode of God, both in the shrines throughout the land and in the devotees' own homes, symbolism, and the inward meditation and realization.

A word may be added here about these three elements. Worship of images in the temples was *parartha puja* for all mankind, for the welfare of the entire society, and worship in the home was for the individual and his family. Temple worship was done by a dedicated group of Sivacharyas, always for the welfare of the community, while worship in the home could be done by anyone who had initiation under a competent guru.

The second element is symbolism; the idol worshipped is not God; it is just a symbol intended to remind people of God and to direct their minds and hearts through the perceived symbol to the

unperceivable One Beyond. God for the worshipper is immanent in the image and yet transcends it, taking him into the unknown beyond.

The third element is meditation. What cannot be perceived by the senses externally, may be realized in the heart, with of course His own Grace. Meditation may take many forms - such as reciting of the divine scriptures, *nama japa* and so on; these are not meditation but these help towards meditation. But without the resultant concentration and meditation, external worship alone may not result in realization. It is only this internal worship or meditation, this *atma puja*, that lends meaning to the external worship, *bahir puja*. These three are not separate compartments, but basically one harmonious integrated whole in the ritual of worship.

When the Upanishads were added on to the Vedas in the course of the later centuries, they could not but be influenced by the religion and philosophy flourishing in the society around them. These naturally embody a considerable volume of the thought of the agamic seers, because some of the early agamas were earlier than the many later Upanishads in point of time, and the agamas were much more alive and vibrating with life and activity than the Upanishads, because they dealt with definite and concrete objects, affecting not only the intelligentia but the entire community, while the others dealt only with abstract concepts, concepts which could be grasped only by the advanced thinkers. The very fact that some later Upanishads had come to be written at all shows that the followers of the original Upanishadic schools had to take note of agamic thoughts, and to bring them also into a single common fold, adopted the device of writing further upanishads, to embrace fresh thought on the same subject. This is quite natural because as society grows, there is all round progress and our scriptures which were not static but embodied dynamic thoughts, took note of the requirements of society and absorbed new thoughts. The Saiva *Upanishads* such as *Brhadjabala* did certainly come into existence a long time after the Agamas.

2. THE VEDAS AND THE AGAMAS

The Agamas claim Vedic authority for their doctrines. The agama doctrines are indeed theistic and such theism is not foreign to the Upanishads. The following agamic passages may be seen

to affirm the derivation of the Agamas from the Vedas: 'The siddhanta consists of the essence of the Veda' (*Suprabhedagama*) 'this *tantra* is of the essence of the Veda', 'this siddhanta knowledge which is the significance of Vedanta is supremely good' (*Mukuta*).[1]

"It has been suggested that the agamic systems were developed out of the *Brahmanas* in the same way as the Upanishads, though at a much later stage, and that some of the later Upanishads like the *Svetasvatara*, which address the Supreme Being by a sectarian title and not as Para Brahman, as of yore, probably grew up under the shadow of the Agamas".[2]

"The agamic cult which was that of the generality of the people, and the Vedic cult which was that of only the priestly classes, officiating for themselves or for others, were both indigenous; they existed and grew up side by side from the earliest times without any extraneous influence; the distinction between the two was in no sense racial".[3]

The agamas are deemed to have scriptural authority and are often called the Veda and the Fifth Veda. As a mater of fact, although the Sanskrit *Nighantu* (lexicon) names the Veda as the *Nigama* and the *Tantra* as the Agama, the Veda and the Agama both seem to have been denoted by the common term *sruti* up to the 11th century, after which period the above distinction of *Nigama* and *Agama* seems to have been adopted.[4] Swami Prajnanananda, quoted by Sir John Woodroffe, has clearly established that the agamic (tantric) texts, as we know them today, had for the most part preceded Buddhism, and only the agamic cult had been able gradually to swallow up Buddhism on the Indian sub-continent, and ultimately to banish it altogether from the Indian soil; it was *not* the Upanishadic philosophy but the agamic cult that was responsible for the supplanting of Buddhism and for the fusion of its salient features into the core of the Hindu religion. This is a very important and pertinent observation deserving the careful attention of all scholars.

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1. Sivadvaita of Srikantha by S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri, 1972, page 3.
2. P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar, quoted by S.S.S. Sastri, ibid., page 1.
3. Sivadvaita of Sastri quoted, Page 73.
4. Perasiriyar, (13th century A.D.) a commentator on the Tamil book Tolkappiyam, referring to the subject matter of the scriptures, mentions the Vedas and the Agamas separately, thereby implying that their contents are different and that they stand for two different bodies of doctrines.

The four parts of the Agamas are likened to the four parts of the Vedas, – namely the *mantra* part or *stotras* comparable to *charya* of the agamas, the *brahmanas* dealing with rituals comparable to *kriya*, the *aranyaka* part analogous to the *yoga*, and the *upanishad* or philosophy part equivalent to the *vidya* or *jnana-pada* of the *agamas*. It is also said that the *Samhita* (mantra) part of the Vedas which is pure *stotra* is not repeated in the agamas because the agamas utilise the vedic mantras and do not use separate *stotras*. They had not broken away from the Vedas and so to avoid repetition they transplant Vedic stotras into their cult. It should be noted that the Agamas have their own mantras for all their *kriyas*. They employ vedic mantras only for the *stotra* part.

Exponents of the Agamas would go further and say that the Supreme of Saivism, Siva, is mentioned in the Vedic terms such as the following:

Isa vasyam idam sarvam.
Yah parah sa mahesvarah.
Sarve vai Rudrah.
Ambika pataye Umapataye.
Yo vai Rudras sa Bhagavan Bhurbhuvas suvah.
Tasmai namas tasmai tva jushtam
niyurajmi yasmai namas tat Sivah.
Haraya Rudraya Sarvaya Sivaya
Bhavaya Maha devaya Ugraya.

(All the names mentioned in the last lines are the specific mantra names of Siva.)

Pasupataye Rudraya Sankaraya Isanaya svaha.
Siva eko dhyeyah, Sivam karas sarvam anyat parityajya.
Yuda charmavat akasam veshtayishyanti manavah
Tada Sivam avijnaya duhkasyanto bhavishyati.

The *Bharga sabda* in the *Gayatri mantra* (*Bharhgo devasya dhimahi*) is considered to refer to Siva. Besides, the introduction of Sri Uma in the *Kenopanishat* explicitly enunciates the Saiva Siddhanta doctrine that ignorance can be dispelled only with the bestowal of Siva's Grace which is personified as Sakti or Uma.

Sa tasminneva akase striyam ajagama,
bahu sobhamanam Umam, Haimavatim.

The *Kaivalyopanishad,* one of the early upanishads, claimed by many to be of the Advaitic or Vedanta school, has the following lines (sloka 7):

Tam Aadi madhyanta vihinam Ekam Vibhum
Chidanandam Arupam Adbhutam
Uma sahayam Paramesvaram Prabhum
Trilochanam Nilakantham Prasaantam.

Here the description of Siva in so many words, as the consort of Uma, Paramesvara (His special name), the Three-eyed, the Blue throated, are significant as pointing to the Supreme Being as Siva.

The *Narada Parivrajakopanishad* is a large upanishad having nine *upadesas* of which the eighth deals with the *Pranava.* In its second *sloka* we find a phrase *Sarvagamayas-Sivah.* Though this upanishad could not have been one of the early upanishads, yet the mention of the agama here as the form of Siva is significant.

There is a similar reference in one of the Devi *ashtottara namas.* Of the many *ashtottara namas* in use by the different Sivacharyas in temple worship today, one begins with the term "*Om Kalyanyai namah*". One of its following names is "*Agama rupinyai namah*", meaning that Devi is of the form of the Agamas. Siva and Sakti are *abhinna,* not separate, and so this term also is significant. Again *Nama* 290 in the *Lalita Sahasra nama may be* noticed here: *Sakalagama sandoha sukti samputa mauktika* – "She wears the pearl in the nose ring enclosed in a shell composed of all the agamas." Though the *Lalitha Sahasra nama* is merely pauranic in character, the mention of the agama is significant as indicating the attempt to identify the agama with Sakti. The references are indicative of the reverence with which the agamas were held and also of the concept of Siva and of Sakti in the agama form. *Sakala agama* is taken by the commentators to mean all the *scriptures;* but the mention of the *Agama* is obvious; it is also relevant to call the agama as the scripture (Veda).

The Saivagamas had gained importance in the country even in the pre-Chola days. One of the titles assumed by Rajasimha Pallava (686-705 A.D.) is *Agama-priya,* the lover of the Agamas.

There is an interesting remark in a verse of Saint Appar (590–671 A.D.) regarding the Agamas and the Vedas even in as early a period as the legendary *Dakshayajna.* Daksha no doubt performed the *yajna* as laid down *in the Vedas;* but he should have done it in the manner laid down *in the Agamas* (which automatically would have given the chief place to Siva) and that is implied as the reason for the destruction of the *yajna* by Siva through the agency of Virabhadra (4, 65, 5).

The invocatory sloka of Kalidasa's poems also point out the origin of Siva for everything created and incidentally he also refers to Siva and His *abhinna-Sakti;* cf. the verse from *Raghuvamsa:*

Vagartha iva sampruktau vagarthah pratibaddhaye
Jagatah pitarau vande Parvati-Paramesvarau.

Hence is also the saying of Sri Kantha Sivacharya in his *Brahma sutra bhashya:*

Vayam tu Veda-Sivagamayor bhedam na pasyamah.

'We do not see any difference between the Vedas and the Sivagamas.'

A Saiva tradition equates the Vedas and the five functions of Siva. It says that the four countenances of Paramesvara revealed the four Vedas, while the Isana, the *urdhva mukha*, revealed the agamas. It goes on to say further that the Yajur veda represents *srishti*(creation), the Rig veda represents *stithi* (protection and preservation), the Sama veda *samhara* (dissolution), the Atharva veda *tirodhana* (obscuration) and the Agamas *anugraha* (bestowal of grace.) Since anugraha is the supreme function among all the five, the supremacy of the Agamas in the Saiva tradition is clearly seen here.

Some other thoughts on the agamas are also relevant here. "The Vedas symbolize the quest; the agamas signify the achievement" – is one. Where the Vedas merely say not this, not this (*neti*), the Agamas clearly and emphatically say "This is It." The Vedas stop with the three *padas - charya, kriya* and *yoga;* but the Agamas go beyond and lead us to the further fourth pada, Jnana. The Vedas speak of only the four states - *jagra, svapna, sushupti* and *turiya;* the Agamas take us to the fifth state, *Turiyatita.*

3. AGE OF THE AGAMAS

Since Tirumular who is considered to have lived in the fifth century A.D. mentions[1] nine agamas by name, we may assume

1. Tirumantiram, verse 63, Samajam edition 1933. The Karana, Kamika, Vira, Cintya, Vatula, Yamala, Kalottara, Suprabheda and Makuta are mentioned by him, by name. He says that he is writing the Agama, the Sivagama, with the Grace of God. He seems to imply that he is writing the Tamil Agama– see verses 73, 74, 81. It is claimed that the nine books (or nine tantras) of Tirumular's book are the essence of the nine agamas mentioned by him; but this view is rather far-fetched.

that the more important agamas at least were written a long time before him. The *Pitakagama* or *Tripitaka* is the name given to the Buddhist scripture. *Tiripitaka* are the three – *Sutra Pitaka, Vinaya pitaka* and *Abhidharma pitaka. Abhidharma pitaka* is said to have given rise in a later day to the *Sutra pitaka.* The *Pitakas* were then orally transmitted. Their language was Pali (or Ardha magadhi of the period). But when the Bhikshus found some unauthorised material being interpolated into the *Pitakas*, they reduced them to writing in the first century B.C. *Pitaka* means a basket; the three fold baskets of Buddhist rules and codes. St. Jnanasambandhar calls it *pidakku.*

This came ino existence immediately after the Buddha (B.C. 563-487) attained *nirvana.* Even some later day Buddhist scriptures call themselves as agamas – *Ekottaragama, Madhyamagama* etc. (Keith page 491 – A History of Sanskrit Literature). The nomenclature of the agama, applied to the later Buddhist religious treatises, was obviously taken from the then existing Hindu (i.e. *vaidika* or Saiva) scriptures.

We are told that the Sàkhya dynasty of Kapilavastu in which Siddharta was born were worshippers of Siva. This city is considered to be in the State of Nepal, which continues to be a Hindu-Saiva State to this day. It is generally held that the agamas were compiled earlier than the Mahabharata; this mentions the *Pasupata* and the *Pancharata* agamas; by the term Pasupata here the Saivagamas in general are meant.[1] All worship took place in that age in Siddharta's country also on agamic lines. This also points to the great antiquity of the agamas. Hence we may conclude, without going into details for the present, that a number of the agamas (though not all the agamas) were in existence in some form long before the sixth century B.C.

We may not be sure that the present versions of the agama are those which existed at that ancient past. As *srutis*, they were handed down by word of mouth from master to disciple, through several centuries, before they came to be written down on palm leaf. Naturally many changes would have crept into the texts, both consciously and unconsciously, as times changed and as the needs and aims of society underwent considerable change. Hence it is

2. For a discussion of the agamas and the Mahabharata, vide Sastri-Note D to chapter I.

possible the original texts became elastic and new ideas were incorporated into the texts. But still, we may be sure that the agamas existed then and came later to be written down; the main streams of thought, particularly philosophical thought, contained in most of the original agamas, were indeed most ancient. Later some *agamas* and *upagamas* were, of course, written and added on in the course of the later centuries, and additions were made to existing standard agamas on a much later date.[1]

Dr. Surendranath Das Gupta says: "The date of the Agamas cannot be definitely fixed. It may be suggested that the earliest of them were written some time in the second or the third century A.D. and these must have been continued till the thirteenth or fourteenth century" (A History of Indian Philosophy, Volume V Page 40). As pointed out already, the earliest agamas date back to centuries earlier than the 6th century B.C.; it is even understandable that additions were made, and the agamas were written perhaps upto the 10th century as in the case of the upanishads.

Some Jain polemical writings of a much later date were called the *Jinagama*.[2] There were also the *Saktagamas*, in praise of Sakti. *Vaikhanasa* and *Pancharatra* are the agamas of the two Vaishnava schools. The number of Saivagamas is very large and most of them preceded the books of the other schools in point of time.

From the remote past, i.e. from the very early days when the agamas were just written, there existed only the Saivagamas. The term agama signified only the Saivagama.[3] The agamas of the other schools of Hinduism were not written at that time.

While speaking of the Saiva philosophy in the *Vayaviya samhita* of the *Siva mahapurana*, Das Gupta remarks that "the

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1. Vide the note under *Uttara-Karana* later on in this discussion.

2. Sivagra yogi (16th century) quotes the *Jinatantra* in his gloss on the *Sivajnana siddhiyar, supaksha* 31. The *Jinagamas* are the *Angagama, Purvagama* and *Bahusruti agama*.

3. Tirumalisai alvar (7th century A.D.) the Vaishnava saint, noted for his bigotry and intolerance and attack on Saivism, says: "We studied Buddhism and Jainism and also the agama scriptures revealed by Sankara (Lord Siva). Finally, through good fortune, we bowed at the feet of Vishnu and now are free from harm. There is nothing that we cannot perform"—(*Guruparampara* text - verse beginning '*Sakkiyam - katrom*'; this verse is not found in his two poems in the Vaishnava Canon). Here we find that the Alvar had identified the agamas with the Saiva cult. Naturally we conclude no Vaishnava agama existed in his day.

purana was written long before the days of Sankara; the *Siva mahapurana* refers to instructions given by Siva to Sakti; it seems therefore that the Saivagamas were written long before the *Siva mahapuranam*."[1] This clearly substantiates his view that the agamas were written by the first centuries A.D.

All the Agamas, as a vast body of writing, did not come into existence together at any particular point of time. Just as the Vedas are called *apaurusheya*, not made by man, the Agamas are also held to be *apaurusheya*. The Vedas are considered to have sprung from the four faces of Brahma and hence *apaurusheya*. But this has to be understood as signifying that the Vedas were revealed to enlightened spiritual seekers who taught them to their disciples and were being continuously handed down from master to disciple and hence the name *sruti*, until they were written down at a late stage on palm leaf. So also the Agamas. They were revealed by the five countenances of Siva to enlightened seers who in turn taught them to their disciples and were written down only at a later stage. These also are *srutis* as much as the Vedas.

The Agamas did not come into existence simultaneously, but did certainly have a gradual evolution even in pre-B.C. and in the first millenium A.D. But the fact that many of them had been quite ancient cannot be doubted, for the reasons set forth earlier. Besides, some of the Agama systems are referred to by Badarayana and so those systems at least must have been earlier than the compilation of the *Brahma sutras*. The compilation of these sutras is considered to have taken place earlier than the Buddha and Mahavira. All these naturally certify to the antiquity of the early Agamas.

Further, researchers in Vira Saiva philosophy have tried to base their schools also on the Saivagamas and they have concluded independently that the Saivagamas should have been written down by some centuries B.C.[2]

The Upagamas contain a criticism of the later schools of thought such as the Samkhya, the Jaina and the Bauddha. Hence it has to be admitted that they could have come into being only after those systems had been established.

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1. Surendranatha Das Gupta, A History of Indian Philosophy Vol.V-p.121.
2. Vide the paper on the Age of the Agamas by Dr. H. P. Malladevaru, Professor of Sanskrit, Mysore University.

Parimelalahar (of the 13th century), the great commentator of *Kural*, seems to be very well versed in the Agamas. Interpreting the phrase *engunattan* occurring in a verse of the invocational decad of *Kural*, he lists the eight attributes of Siva and says that these are taken from the Saivagamas. There are no such eight attributes to Vishnu in the Vaishnava books nor is he happy in this context, over the reference to the eight attributes of Arhadeva as found in the Jain books. Here, though he is an ardent Vaishnava, he mentions the Saivagamas as authoritative. Again in his commentary on *Paripadal* (c. 2nd entury A.D.) he mentions the Agamas twice. "Thou (Vishnu) art incomprehensible even to all the vast Agamas, to the ego and to the mind, to the sensory perceptions and to everything else" (Verse 3: lines 48-50); "the priests well recite the agamas now, commencing the festivities for the Lord, the Presiding Deity of the Ardra constellation (11. 77-8)"; the second is again a reference to the Saivagamas.

The great veneration with which this writer mentions the Agamas in his commentaries on the books of the Sangham age indicates that he considered them to be the writing with a great antiquity.

4. TAMIL AGAMAS

Some Tamil scholars had thrown out the suggestion that the Agamas were first written in Tamil several thousand years ago, embodying an independent body of doctrines and that they were lost owing to natural and political causes; the Sanskrit translators had assimilated the Tamil thoughts into the vedic religion; that the vedic origin claimed for the agamas is not worthy of credence; that the very name agama ('that which has come, presumably from another language) is itself indicative of its support for this theory; and that the *tantra* itself is of Tamilian origin (*tantu* means thread, *nul* in Tamil; *nul* means also a book). Professor S. S. Suryanarayana sastri, with a fair and open mind, remarks: "There is much to be said in favour of the theory; the displacement of sacrifice and the substitution of worship by meditation, symbols and idols in its place were probably due to non-Vedic influences. The non-Vedic peoples might have belonged to other races or there might have been adventurous sections among the Aryans themselves, who having struck out for themselves new paths of life and thought,

came back or were brought back subsequently to the fold incidentally enriching the parent stock of culture".[1]

The Mohenjadaro excavations have brought to light Sivalinga worship in the period, 3500 years ago. Russian, Finnish and Indian teams who have attempted to decipher the Indus valley script have independently arrived at the conclusion that that culture could have had nothing to do with Sanskrit or the Aryans, that it was entirely different and that it could have been the proto-type of what is today labelled as a Dravidian civilization. We may remember that the only member of the Dravidian group which can lay any claim to antiquity in culture and language is Tamil and the Indus valley civilization can easily be equated with a proto-Tamil one. Research workers of all nationalities have been trained in a tradition which had always held Sanskrit to be supreme; and most had not heard of Tamil as a parallel, if not as a more ancient, language and culture. Hence when here Sanskrit was the rule, they were unable to think of a Tamil or proto-Tamil but could think only of a proto-Dravidian. Dravidian in all the ancient periods meant only Tamil. Hence also we may say without any contradiction that the Sivalinga worship derivable from the excavations could have been regulated by some Tamil texts which can now be called the Tamil agamas.

However there is no fragment of direct evidence to support this theory of Tamil agamas. But the whole concept is not on that account to be dismissed as mere conjecture. Besides, the independent nature of the Sivagama thoughts which are partially opposed to the abstract Vedanta may also lend support to their Tamil origin.

Again, the submerged continent theory is now gaining ground. Lemuria had a vast wealth of Tamil literary works and it is quite possible that the Tamil agamas (by whatever name they were called then) had also been in existence but lost along with the other named Tamil texts.

Tirumular says in several places that he is uttering the Sivagama after meditating on the Lord's feet daily (73): that the agamas are the nine (63): that the Lord created him so that he might write about Him in Tamil (81):

> *Contemplating on Him daily , I am now expounding the Agama* (73).

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1. Sivadvaita of Srikantha 1972, page 4 f.n.

He created me in the proper manner so that I might write on Him in the Tamil language (81).

Tirumular also mentions nine Sanskrit agamas (vide page 6, footnote). It is evident from these that he is writing now the Sivagama afresh in Tamil because the Tamil agamas which had existed previously had all disappeared.

The position mentioned here by Tirumular has happened definitely because the originals in Tamil had disappeared, the Sanskrit agamas had taken their places, and so he is now giving the agama essence afresh in Tamil. The term agama in Sanskrit may also mean that which has *come into Sanskrit from Tamil.*

5. THE TERM AGAMA

The Agamas, like the Vedas, are all today in Sanskrit. But unlike the Vedas and the Upanishads, which are in verse and prose, all the agamas are only in verse. The Vedas are all in the nature of mantras and so are mostly in the form of aphorisms; the Agamas on the other hand have all been written down as *slokas* (verses).

Several explanations have been offered for the term agama. One is that because it emanated from God, it is called the Agama, that which came (from God), *a-gama.*

Another is that the three letters *a-ga-ma* respectively denote *pati, pasu* and *pasa* (the Self, the soul and the bonds) and that the agama deals with all these three entities and their relationship, and hence this name.

A Sanskrit verse gives an interesting meaning for the three syllables *a, ga,* and *ma:*

Agatam Siva vaktrebhyah gatam ca girija mukhe
Matam ca Siva bhaktanam agamam cheti katyate.

'The agamas originated from the faces of Siva, fell on the ears of Parasakti and spread in the world as the *mata* (religion) of the Siva bhaktas.' The agamas are mostly in the form of instruction from Siva to Sakti. They take their name from the first letters of the words *agatam* (originated), *gatam* (fell) and *matam* (religion) as mentioned in this sloka.

The agama is so called because it enumerates the code of conduct, shows the way to Divine Knowledge, and describes the greatness of God. It elaborates on the Supreme Reality and the mantras and through these it helps redeem humanity.

In the Saiva school, a special root meaning is indicated for the term. It is given as *a*-knowledge, *ga*-liberation and *ma*-removal of the bonds. The agama came to be called as such, since a study of the agama and a faithful adherence to its codes liberates the soul from bondage, or worldly fetters, causes realization of the Supreme, and ultimately confers Eternal Bliss.

The common noun *agama* simply means coming or acquisition. In logic, *agama*, signifying *apta* or *sabda pramana*, is the third category of proofs (*pratyaksha*-perception, *anumana*-inference and *agama* - scriptural authority) accepted in all systems of Indian philosophy.

A word may be said here about the use of the term agama; this is a general term signifying any scripture that was revealed, The fact that the term has been adopted by the Jains, the Buddhists. and even the Christians in the 19th century, who called their old and the New Testaments of the Bible as the *Palaiya* (old) agama and the *Pudiya* (new) agama (Tamil), only goes to prove that the original agama was much older in point of time and that such agama was only the Siddhanta agama. The term agama had such scriptural authority that all later religious treatises, claiming to have authority in their sects, could not but adopt the name Agama, which was considered by them to be synonymous with the Veda.

Although the special scriptures of Saivism, Vaishnavism and Saktaism are generally known as agamas, this term has, however, come to have a specialised significance in later days. Only the Saiva agamas are referred to as the agamas; the Vaishnava agamas are mostly referred to as the *samhitas;* and the Sakta agamas are referred to as the *tantras*. Though we may understand this broad classification, it does not preclude one class of books from being known by the other terms. There are a few agamas named as tantras e. g. *Kumaratantiram* and samhitas in Saivism and so on, but their number is small.

Occasionally some Upagamas are called the *samhitas*, and yet a few others are called the *tantras;* vide *Bhima samhita* under *Karana*, *Parvati samhita* and *Padma samhita* under *Ajita*, and the *Vidyapurana tantra* under Amsumat. These are only four; no other upagama bears a name with these endings. However, it has to be stated that the agamas are also called tantras: vide terms like the *Karanakhya maha tantra*, *Ajitakhya maha tantra* and so on, found in the colophons of the agama manuscripts.

6. THE TANTRAS AND THE AGAMAS

In the history of the Sanskrit source material for the Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy, the Agamas occupy a unique position. Modern students of the Sanskrit sources have often confused the Saiva Agamas with the Tantra texts. Hence we shall say here a few words in general terms about the two. It is stated that the *Vedas*, the *Smritis*, the *Puranas* and the *Tantras* were respectively intended for the four *yugas* - the *Satya*, (or Krta), the *Treta*, the *Dvapara* and the *Kali yugas;* the Kali yuga is the age in which we live. To suit the progressive concepts of social living, the Tantras have been made more cosmopolitan and democratic in character in this, that they are open to *both the sexes* and to *all the four castes*,[1] unlike the Vedas which are considered to be reserved only for the *higher castes*. Tantra means that which is well constructed and which protects (*tan yate trayate ca tantra*–that which is well made, that which protects is tantra).

The Tantras (wrongly called the Agamas) are of several different schools, the *Saiva*, the *Saktla* the *Vaishnava*, the *Saura* (relating to the sun) and the *Ganapatya* (relating to the worship of Ganapati). The followers of these five schools were collectively known as the *Pancha-Upasakas*. Later, the Kaumara school, relating to the worship of Kumara (Subrahmanya)–also seems to have been added. With this addition, the six schools had come to be known as the six Schools of worship, the *Shanmatas*.

The main schools had several sub-divisions each. Of these, apart from the Saiva and the Vaishnava cults, only the Sakta school has any large following in the present day.[2] This was the chief cult in the whole of Bengal, where we learn three branches– the *Kaula*, the *Misra* and the *Samya* – existed. The Saiva school had two main divisions, the Kashmir school and the Saiva Siddhanta school of the Tamilnad. The Kashmir school had imbibed from the beginning a considerable amount of the Advaita philosophy of later day Sankara.

But the Southern school of Siddhanta had always retained its distinctive and independent character, and had called itself also *advaita*. It had generally voiced its opposition to the non-theistic

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1. The four castes or varnas as adopted by the Aryans were the Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra castes, the first three being called the higher castes.
2. Ganapati worship is prevalent extensively in the Maharashtra area.

advaita of Sankara. The Saiva school seems to have preserved through the Agamas its own independent and pure character till the advent of Sankara. The branch which absorbed part of Sankara's doctrines probably got isolated as the Kashmir school, while the Southern school of Saivism retained its wholly pure and individual character, through its adherence to the Agamic doctrines and later through the teaching of the Siddhanta prophet, Meykandar. According to Das Gupta, 'the Agamic Saivism belongs principally to the Tamil country, the Pasupata to Gujarat, and the Pratyapijna to Kashmir and the northern parts of India (page 18).

The Tantras in Bengal may be said to run on parallel lines with the Saiva Agamas in the South. Both have a Supreme Being, the Sakti for the Tantras and Siva for the Agamas. The four *padas*, *jnana*, *yoga*, *kriya* and *charya* are dealt with by both. But the two are essentially different in their starting point, their development, their *sadhana* or practices, and their ultimate goal. Both profess to have the greatest reverence to the Vedas, but the Agamas have a subtle reservation, which has been referred to earlier in the words of the *Saiva Siddhanta Paribhasha*. The Upanishads have been said by scholars to have made an attempt to re-state the *jnana* content of the Vedas in philosophical terminology. The Tantras have been probably considered as an attempt to revive the other three padas of the Vedic cult. But the Agamas seek to revive and re-state *all* the four padas equally, from a different stand point. They have been interwoven with the philosophic thought and spiritual discipline of the ancient Tamil people from a hoary past.

Temple worship is not only part of the spiritual discipline of the Saiva aspirant but it is also a *sadhana* for ultimate release in Saiva Siddhanta. Temple worship finds no place in the Vedas or the Upanishads; they do not mention temples. The Vedas have their emphasis on *agnikarya* and sacrifices but have no place for the temple or temple worship. We do not propose to go here into a discussion of the need or otherwise for temple worship. This worship may perhaps be said to be a parallel to the cult of fire worship elaborated in the Vedas. In this respect, the Tantras are at variance with the Agamas, since they lay down an elaborate discipline practically for personal worship and not for external worship or congregational worship in a shrine, which is intended for the welfare of the society. No doubt the Tantras also deal with

the four padas, but the difference is all on the emphasis and the practice.

The Tantras have emphasized a wide range of *devatas*, each endowed with a special potentiality of the Supreme in helping the votary onward along his path of spiritual progress. These have, in turn, given rise to a distinct sect among the Tantra followers, known as the *Vama marga*,[1] which is defined also as the *Bhoga marga*, a path of enjoyment of worldly pleasures. It is also pointed out that this only indicates the degeneration and disrepute into which the Tantra marga had fallen, and that this does not detract from the sublime conception and the lofty standards of purity in the individual going along that path, as envisaged in the Tantra marga proper.[2] The *Vama marga* is quite alive and popular and widely followed in Bengal. Broadly speaking, Tantra specilizes in working for bhoga (pleasures of this life), while the Agama on the other hand lays down disciplines for moksha (a liberation). Thus the Tantra marga can have an appeal for the mass mind, while the Agama marga (called then Saiva siddhanta or the Agamanta can have an appeal only to the spiritually inclined.

1. We have an echo of this *vamachara* in Tamilnad in the story of Abhirami bhatta (of the early 18th century) author of the famous *Abhirami antadi*, a popular devotional poem of one hundred verses in praise of Sakti Abhirami enshrined at Tirukkadavur in Tanjavur district. It should be noted also that Bhattar sings of Sakti (Abhirami) as being higher than the Trimurtis-Brahma, Hari and Hara (verses 7, 51, 74, 97 etc. of the *Antadi*); he enumerates several names of Sakti which were tantraic in nature (vide verses 50, 77 etc.); yet Bhattar was not a Vamacharin; the allegation of vamachara was made by jealous persons but it was disproved by a miracle performed for his sake by Sakti Herself.

2. Vide T. V. Kapali Sastry: Further lights - the Veda and the Tantra- page 199.

7. THE TERMS TANTRAM AND MANTRAM

An explanation for the term *tantra* is given as follows:

Tanoti vipulan arthan
tantra mantra samanvitan
Tranam cha kurute pumsan
tena tantram iti smritam.

When *tantra* and *mantra* are added on, they give greater significance. It is called tantra because it also affords protection to man. (*Tan*-to spread and *tra* - to protect.) This term is applied to the agama scriptures obviously because it gives protection or security to the mortals in this life by expounding to them a spiritual code of conduct and thereby protecting them against the cycle of births and deaths. Similarly the term *mantra*:

Mananam sarva veditvam
tranam samsara sagarat,
manava trana dharmitvat
mantram iti abhidhiyate.

The utterance or memorization (*mananam*) confers a knowledge of all things and it affords protection (*tranam*) from the ocean of *samsara*; hence it is cognition and meditation and *tranam* is protection from the cycle of births and deaths. (*man*-to think; *tra*-to protect; *mantram*- protects the thinker or utterer).

In a song of supplication to Siva, it is interesting to note that St. Appar (590-671 A.D.) mentions His name as Vaidyanatha and says that "He cures the incurable ailment of the souls, namely that of births and deaths by Himself becoming the *mantra*, the *tantra* and the medicine therefor."[1]

It is also claimed that the term *Tantra* is derived from the Tamil word *tantu*, thread; this is a literal translation of the Tamil word for *nuul* which means also a book. This is a highly plausible derivation. The term *nuul* (meaning both a thread and a book) has been well defined in the two senses in the Tamil grammatical treatises.[2] Hence this derivation does indeed merit serious consideration.

Tantra is so called also because it elaborates the Supreme Reality and Mantras and through that it saves humanity.

1. *Devaram* of St. Appar 6. 54.8   2. Cf. *Nannul* 24.

8. THE ORIGIN OF THE AGAMAS

Siva the Supreme is said to have revealed both the Vedas and the Agamas to enlightened souls. The *Sankara Samhita of Skanda purana* says; "The Vedas are in the middle of the mouth of Siva, the *aksharas* (letters) are in the teeth, and the Agamas in the tongue":

Asya madhye sthita vedah, Devadevasya bhusurah,
Aksharani tu danteshu, jihvayam tu Sivagamah.

In his Tamil Introduction to the *Tirumantram* edition (1911) of Visvanatha Pillai, the erudite scholar, V. V. Ramana Sastri has some interesting remarks about the agamas and the *agamanta.*[1]

"Kashmir is the birth place of the Agamanta cult. The *pratyabhijna*[2] school originated from there. Saiva Siddhanta is the essence of the 28 agamas. When the agamas came south from the north they appeared as the Viramahesvara darsana in West India and as the Saiva darsana in south India. This was a few thousand years before the advent of the four Saiva acharyas like Sambandha. Temple rituals are the outward manifestation of the agama influence. Tirumular wrote his Tirumantram purporting to give in its nine books (or nine tantras) the substance of the nine agamas mentioned by him. Of the nine, only eight are principal agamas while the nineth Yamala is not a Saiva agama, but seems to be a *Sakta tantra.* Evidently, the Tirumantram text had been interfered with and the original name of some agama had been substituted by Yamala. The Vira and the Vatula are the principal texts for the Viramahesvara sect."

These statements, coming from a great scholar, like Ramana Sastri, are not historically accurate.[3] The statementt that the agamas came from the north is totally incorrect. The Vira Mahesvara cult is what is now known as the Vira Saiva sect, which was propagated in the Kannada area by Basava (middle of

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1. Just as *Vedanta* is the essence of the Veda (i.e. the Upanishad), *Agamanta* is the essence of the Agama (i.e. the Siddhanta).

2. The term *pratyabhijna* means to come to oneself, to recover one's consciousness; Recognition. Vide Section 3, chapter 2.

3. "Madhava in his *Sarva darsana sangraha* of the fourteenth century A.D., who mentions the Pasupatas and the Agamic Saivas does not seem to know anything about the Vira Saivas" - Das Gupta, *History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. V 1955 page 42.

the 12th century). This took root in the Tamilnad some centuries later from the days of Saints Santalinga swami, Sivaprakasa swami, Kumara deva and Chidambara swami in the 17th century, and of course could have had nothing to do with Tirumular. His argument that the agamas were earlier than the Saiva acharyas by at least a thousand years and that Tirumular would have lived earlier than the 6th century A.D. are of course quite true.[1]

There is one more point to be noted. Excavations at Mohenjadero and Harappa have brought to light a proto-dravidian civilization, which had Sivalinga worship; a sculpted figure of a dancer has also been unearthed. These facts go to indicate that Saivism had been prevalent throughout the Indian sub-continent five thousand years ago, and therefore there is no basis for saying that Saivism spread to the south from Kashmir.

The familiar lines of a Tamil verse defining the relationship of the Veda and the Agama may be recalled here: "The Veda is the cow; the Agama is its milk; the song of the four Saiva Samaya acharyas (Jnanasambandhar, Appar, Sundarar and Manikkavacakar) is the ghee (clarified butter) extracted therefrom; and the sweetness of that ghee is the *Sivajnana bodham*, written by Saint Meykanda devar.

Kunjitangri stava in 315 slokas, (said to be written by Saint Umapati Sivacharya which may be doubtful) says in verse 4 that "the 28 agamas beginning from Kamika, which emanated from the countenances of Paramesvara are worshipping Lord Nataraja in the Kanakasabha in the form of the 28 pillars." It is well known that the Hall is supported by 28 columns which are considered to represent the agamas.

9. ANTIQUITY OF THE AGAMAS

The subject has been dealt with fully in Section 7 on the Origin of the Agamas. Yet, one of two further remarks may be relevant here.

In the context of the Sivalinga and the dancer together obtained in the excavations, we are inclined to make a guess based on the

1. Das Gupta fixed Tirumular in the first century A.D.; this may not be correct (ibid. Page 19). Tirumular is considered to have lived in the fifth century A.D.

temple worship rituals elaborated from the days of the Chola Emperors. *Shodasa upacharas* (sixteen acts of homage and honour) are offered to the Sivalingas in all the major temples daily. *Gita vadya nrutta* (vocal music, instrumental music and dance) are part of the sixteen *upacharas*. The dance *upachara* is still being done in several temples by women dancers who had been hereditory temple dancers and who had been given land endowments by the rulers and had been enjoying them for about a thousand years. The dancer figure found in the Mohenjadaro excavations suggest to us that dance might also have been one of the offerings made to the Sivalinga even in that remote past.

There is an interesting remark in a verse of Saint Appar (590–671 A.D.) regarding the Agamas and the Vedas even in as early a period as the legendary *Daksha yajna.* Daksha no doubt performed the *yajna* as laid down in the Vedas; but he should have done it in the manner laid down in the Agamas (which automatically would have given the chief place to Siva) and that is implied as the reason for the destruction of the *yajna* by Siva through the agency of Virabhadra.

The Saivagamas had gained importance in the country even in the pre-Chola days. One of the titles assumed by Rajasimha Pallava (686-705 A.D.) is *Agama-priya*, the lover of the Agamas and another is the *Saiva Siddhantin*.

Although we find that the availabe Agamas are only in Sanskrit, a deep consideration of the life and culture of the people, their temples and temple rituals and worship may make us pause and ask if there were not really original Tamil sources for all this culture and worship and whether the Sanskrit rituals were not actually taken from the Tamil originals.

10. THE NUMBER OF THE AGAMAS

The Agamas are said to be infinite in number.[1] They are of several categories such as *lowkika* (worldly), *vaidika* (following the Vedas), *adyatmika* (on spiritual matters), *atimarga* (beyond the revealed paths) and *mantra* (mystic symbols). Of these, only the *mantra* category is considered to be the Siddhanta, and the others

1. 'The limitless ocean of the agamas' says *Kalladam* (69) a Tamil poem of the 11th century; vide also *Tirumantram* 58, 60, 64.

are heterodox systems.[1] However, the terms *agama*, *tantra*, *siddhanta* and *mantra* are found used synonymously in many agamic writings.

The aspects of Siva are five in number - *Sadyojata*, *Vamadeva*, *Aghora*, *Tatpurusha* and *Isana*.[2] Each of these has five faces; from these twentyfive faces were revealed numberless agamas, according to one tradition.

Arulnandi sivam classifies the sastras into two categories – the Vedas and the Sivagamas; it is significant that he calls the Sivagamas, Saiva Books here; he calls the other Sivagamas, the Saiva Books (Vedas nuul and Saiva nuul). All other books are derived from these. These two books were eternally revealed by Siva. Of the two, the Vedas are general and disclosed for the benefit of all; the Agamas are special and revealed for the benefit of the blessed and they contain the essential truths of the Veda and the Vedanta. All other books are heterodox" (*Sivajnana siddhiyar supaksha* 267 Tamil).

One tradition says that Sadasiva revealed the four agamas to *Garuda*,[3] *Vama*, *Bhutatantra* and *Bhairava* from the four faces – Sadyojata, Vamadeva, Aghora and Tatpurusha, and the well known 28 Saiva agamas from the Isana countenance. The first four had respectively one, twentyfour, four and two parts. But this tradition does not possess much currency. The accepted version of the origin is different.

Navagamas (nine agamas) seem to be a traditional grouping. The nine mentioned by Saint Tirumular had already been referred to. A writer of the early 18th century[4] quotes a Sanskrit verse giving the names of nine agamas, which are unfamiliar - *Paratatva ragam*, *Paramam*, *Sivam*, *Sakti*, *Kala*, *Devaprasadam*, *Paratantravataram*, *Sivajnanasaram* and *Sivasadakyaprasadam*.

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1. Sivajnanaswami mentions these and says that only the mantra is the Siddhanta and the other four are herterodox-*Sivajnana bhashya*, introduction.

2. These represent – the western, northern, southern eastern, and uplifted countenances of Siva is this order.

3. Garuda: Garuda (the king eagle) is the mount of Vishnu. The Kiranagama is said to have been revealed to Garuda. This might well have been the Garudagama metnioned here. Besides, the first upagama under Kirana is also named Garuda.

4. Velliambalavana Tambiran (C. 1675-1720) in his *Jnanabharana vilakkam*, Dharmapuram page 9.

The Saivagama is a general term applied to four different schools; the Saiva, Pasupata, Soma and Lakula. Of these, the Saiva is said to have had three branches: Vama, Dakshina and Siddhanta; Kapala, Kalamukha, Agora are all contained in the *Vama* branch. The *Dakshina* branch includes Kashmir Saiva darsanas, Svachanda Bhairavam etc. making up a total of 18. The *Siddhanta* branch has 28 agamas and these are the agamas with which we are concerned in this discussion, and these are the traditional Saivagamas.

The agamas are again said to be of two categories-the *srauta* following the *sruti*, the Veda, and the *a-srauta*, not related to the Veda: the Kapalika, Pasupata and the Kalamukha schools of Saivism are said to belong to the *a-srauta* category while the 28 Saivagamas and their upagamas are of the *srauta* category.

The definition of Siddhanta often quoted by writers may be given here:

Siddhanta nama yah parikshakaih bahu vitam parikshya
hetubhih sadayitva stapyate nirnayah sa siddhantah –

Gautama nyaya sutram, 1.26: "that which stands many tests and is finally established is the Siddhanta".

The 28 Saiva Agamas are said to have been revealed from all the five faces of Siva;[1] the first four taught five agamas each, while the last, Isana, gave rise to eight. The *Sadyojata* revealed the Kamika, Yogaja, Cintya, Karana and Ajita; they were taught to Kausika rishi. The *Vamadeva* gave rise to Dipta, Sukshma, Sahasra, Amsumat and Suprabheda, and taught them to Kasyapa rishi. The *Aghora* revealed Vijaya, Nisvasa, Svayambhuva, Agneya (or Anala) and Vira, and gave them to sage Bharadvaja. The *Tatpurusha* gave rise to Raurava, Makuta, Vimala, Chandrajnana and Mukhabimba (or Bimba), and taught them to sage Gautama. The last face *Isana* revealed the remaining eight agamas namely, Prodgita, Lalita, Siddha, Santana, Sarvokta, Paramesvara, Kirana and Vatula, and taught them to Sage Agastya.[2]

The first ten agamas were taught by Sadasiva to the Vidyesvaras and other celestial beings and so they are called the *Sivabheda* agamas (Saiva or God-taught). The remaining 18 were

1. Manikkavacakar accepts this tradition. He says that Siva revealed the agamas from the Mahendra hill from his five faces: *Tiruvacakam* 2, lines 19-20.

2. Vide Table of 28 agamas appended.

taught to 36 Rudras, beginning from Anadirudra, and hence these were called the Rudrabheda agamas (Raudric or man-realized). The first ten were taught again in turn to *three* celestial beings each, while the other eighteen were taught to *two* each, thus making a total of 66 celestials (30 + 36) who learned the agamas.[1]

Anantesvara taught the agamas to Srikantha, who in turn taught them to the sages. The sages initiated their disciples into the mysteries of the agamas and thus the books came to have currency among the mortals. The Kamikagama tabulates all the 28 agamas in serial order, their origin, the number of verses therein, the organ of Siva which they represent, persons to whom they were revealed and the Upagamas under each.

It is the tradition in Sanskrit to trace the origin of any valuable book to a divine source and so there is nothing unusual in the Saivagamas claiming their origin from Lord Siva Himself.

Though the principal Saiva Agamas had been said to be 28 in number in many books and in the Agamas themselves, there had existed a doubt among many that perhaps the number was an exaggeration and the whole story was a myth. This doubt has been removed by the patient researches of the French Institute of Indology, Pondichery, which has been able to gather in whole or in parts, 28 principal agamas so far, (according to its Editor, Sri N. R. Bhatt) and 45 of the Upagamas. Almost all of these have been quoted in the notes to the Institute's editions of the agamas. It is true that all the parts of all the agamas have not yet become fully available and that only some parts or *padas* of some agamas have been recovered. But still we may say as a matter of certainty that the number of the principal agamas was indeed 28.

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1. In the Saiva canonical books, the terms Agama and Saiva are often used synonymously. Saint Arulnandi has taken the cue evidenctly from a mention by Sekkilar. In the first verse of the biography of Sambandhar, Sekkilar says that" Sambhandhar was born on this earth in order that the Vedic system might prosper and the Saiva system might illumine the land"; the Saiva system here means the Agama school:*Veda neri talaithonga mihu saivathurai vilanga – Periyapuranam* 1904. The number 66 here arrived at is also the number mentioned in Tirumantiram 57.

11. WORSHIP OF THE AGAMA BOOKS

It is a recognized practice in Hinduism to worship the scriptures, which are the revealed word of God, as God Himself.[1] The Agamas are the revealed word of God and are accordingly worshipped. The worship of books in daily personal worship is called *pustaka puja*. In *parartha puja* or congregational worship, an indwelling deity or devata is imagined for the Agamas and it is worshipped as the Agamas devata.

It may be interesting to note that Sivalingas have actually been installed in the name of the agamas for worship in the Siva temples. The *agama devata* is described for contemplation purposes in the following words:

He is radiant like crystal, with three eyes, the sacred ash on his forehead, wearing the deer skin and seated on the tiger skin in the *padmasana* posture, and holding in his sixteen hands the sword, the trident, the three leaved lance, the club, the bow and the arrow, the *Varada* (posture of the hand giving a boon), the *abhaya* (posture of the hand conferring protection from all fear), the mace, the goad, the *chinmudra*, the rosary, the Book, the water pot, the dagger and the shield; the *dhyana sloka* says: 'May the Saivagama deva contemplated upon in this manner afford me protection.'

The *Tattvanidhi*, a late *Silpa sastra* (1838 A.D.) quotes the *Lakshmi narayana samhita* under *Skanda purana* as its authority for the *dhyana* of the Agama devata:

Saivagamas chaiva dikshavasah panchaksharo rshih,
Suddha sphatika sankasah tripundrankita mastakah.
Trayakshas charmaparidhanah vaiyaghrajina samsthitah
Suddha padmasano devi yashtabhyaih khatvanga sulaka.
Sakti dandam chapa banau vara bhiti gadankusam
cinmudrikam cakshamalam pustakam ca kamandalam
khadga khetau dadhano ayam payat saivagamaivahuh.
sveta varnah.

(As these dhyana slokas may not be so easily available to most, they are fully extracted here in original.)

In *atmartha* Siva puja, there is a worship for the scripture, the *pustaka puja*. After the *panchavarana puja*, puja for the guru

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1. Worship of books is as old as the Hindu religion and culture. Even today the Tirumurai manuscripts (palm leaf) are worshipped in many homes.

and for the *vidya pitha* is done; the latter is the pustaka puja; in essence it is only a puja for the *agama sastra*. The installation of Sivalingas in the name of the 28 agamas is just a projection of the *vidyapitha puja* of the *svartha puja* into the ritual of *parartha puja* or temple worship. The book is of course the palm leaf manuscript; length and breadth for the leaves of the book are prescribed and different names for the different sized books are also mentioned.

Saint Manikkavackar says that as the Agama, Siva confers bliss. Here he identifies Siva with the Agama. Hence Agama worship is itself Siva worship. 28 Siva lingas have been installed in the remote past in the name of the 28 agamas in the north-western corner of the outer court of the Vriddhagirisvarar temple in Vriddhachalam, an important town in South Arcot district in Tamilnad. The lingas are known as the respective Agamesas, from Kamikesa to Vatulesa.

12. THE CONTENT OF THE AGAMAS

The Agamas are the scriptures, a study of which is calculated to help the yearning soul to perceive the nature of matter and of all created things, to realise the true nature of the individual self, which although bound up with gross matter, can free itself from all this bondage and seek oneness with the Supreme Self and, with the guidance of Divine Grace, to know that Self and become one with It. Sadasiva revealed to spiritually advanced souls, the agamas, which embodied the path of such salvation to the mortals who are caught up in the cycle of births and deaths. The four paths towards this end have been developed by Tamil Siddhanta sastra writers in the evolutionary order of Charya, Kriya, Yoga, and Jnana. These four are fully dealt with in the agamas, mostly in the order of Jnana, Kriya, Yoga and Charya. The Jnana part is the Philosophy of the agamas while the other three may be taken as dealing with the sadhana or practice.

Of the agamas available in print today, only the *Suprabheda*, the *Mrgendra* (upagama) and the *Kirana* contain all the four parts.

From the volume of writing under each head, it can be clearly seen that the emphasis of the agamas was equally on the *jnana* and the *kriya* parts, that is, both the philosophical and the ritualistic aspects.

The total number of verses in all the agamas is given as 11

thousand billion, 305 million, 154 thousand indeed quite a staggering total, an astronomical figure, beyond human reckoning. But if we remember that the first part (*purvabhaga*) of *Karana kriya pada* alone has 10528 verses, (Section 2, chapter 24) we may not be so easily staggered at the mention of the total number, which might be a total for the agamas and the upagamas (and perhaps the agamas under the other Saiva schools also).

The general belief even among the most discerning writers of philosophy is that the agamas deal with rituals and that they have nothing to do with philosophy. No one has taken greater pains to study, understand and elucidate the agamas than Dr. S. N. Das Gupta of Calcutta. He has studied all the agamas available to him in the nagari script and in translation. But even he believed that the agamas had their emphasis only on rituals:

"We have, however, in our treatment of Agamic Saivism, tried to utilise the materials of the Agamas that are still available as complete wholes or in fragments. But a large part of the Agamas deals with rituals, forms of worship, construction of the place of worship and mantras, and the like. These have no philosophical value and could not, therefore, be taken account of and had simply to be ignored. ....The Agamas literature is pretty extensive, but its philosophical achievement is rather poor. The Agamas contain some elements of philosophical thought, but their interest is more on religious details of the cult of Saivism. We find therefore a good deal of ritualism, discussion of the architectural techniques for the foundation of temples and mantras and details of worship connected with the setting up of the symbol of Siva. Yet in most of the Agamas there is a separate section called the *Vidya pada* in which the general philosophical view underlying the cult is enunciated".[1]

The Jnana part of the Matanga agama has already been printed as a large volume with the commentary of Bhatta Rama kantha and the other three parts are also said to be available and are being printed by the French Institute of Indology at Pondichery.

The essentials of the agama may be condensed here in the three terms - the deity which here is the supreme Siva, the Mantra and the imparting of the Knowledge by the Guru.

The following table shows the order in which the four padas

1. Das Gupta, History of Indian Philosophy, Volume V page 20.

are treated in the available agamas, which deal with more than one part:

Suprabheda	:	Kriya, Charya, Yoga, and Vidya.
Raurava I and II	:	Vidya and Kriya.
Kirana	:	Vidya, Kriya, Charya and Yoga.
Matanga	:	Vidya, Kriya, Charya and Yoga.
Mrgendra	:	Vidya, Yoga, Kriya and Charya.
[Siddhanta Saravali[1]	:	Vidya, Kriya, Yoga and Charya.]

13. THE JNANA PADA

The *Jnana pada* or *Vidya pada* as it is otherwise called is the part dealing with the metaphysical basis of the Agama system. It provides the philosophical Truths underlying the system and expounds the origin, the rationale and the goal. The Agamas accept the Veda and build up on it. The Vedanta may be termed the basis for the agamic philosophy. The Supreme is one and All is He, Siva. The emphasis of the Vedanta on the soul and mind is now shifted so as to encompass a larger part of man or rather the complete man. This is of course because of Agamic theism and now the teaching embraces the complex personality of man, his emotions and heart, and his will as well. This is the knowledge part of *Jnana pada.*

Getting into details, we find the subject matter of the Jnana pada (vidya pada) varies in the agamas, according to the approach of each to the subject. Most deal with the definition of *Pati*, *pasu* and *pasa* (God, souls and the bonds), their relationship, and the *sadhana*, the means for the *pasu* to obtain release from *pasa* and for the attainment of oneness with *Pati*. Some take up *pasa* in detail, and deal with the three groups of *tattvas*-atma tattva, vidya tattva and suddha tattva and the *tattvas* themselves elaborately. The *Matanga Paramesvara* devotes most of its chapters to the elucidation of the *tattvas* only. *Pancha kritya* or the fivefold functions symbolized by the Nataraja form of Siva is dealt with in the *Mrgendra upagama.*

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1. *Siddhanta saravali* is an important though short manual of 166 *slokas* dealing with all the four padas. It was written by Trilocana sambhu, perhaps in the 13th century. It was published in 1887 with the Sanskrit gloss of Ananta Sivacharya and also with a Tamil translation. The book is valuable as serving as an introduction to the four parts of the agamas.

14. THE KRIYA PADA

This pada considers not the individual man alone but considers man in society. It has a concern and involvement in the community around. The temple is an outward expression of this concern. Influences between man and the community around are mutual. The thoughts, aspirations and actions of the one affect the other. For the society to hold together intact as a unit, there has to be an identity of all thought and aim and activity. The community as such or the masses are not attracted by abstract thoughts or philosophy but are attracted by definite activity such as rituals and puja or worship, festivals and the like, where they also have some kind of physical participation. Congregational worship besides festivals is the one great force that holds together society without disintegrating and the *kriya pada* lays down an elaborate code therefor which is both emotional and artistic, and rational at the same time. All symbolism has come into himself and helped him to realise the Inner Presence; when a large mass of humanity concentrates on one activity, an activity which is a spiritual activity, each individual aspiration gets a fulfillment, growth, strength, nourishment and ultimately in good time and through His grace even realization.

It is this activity that has held together the Hindu society through so many centuries when alien cultures and religions bombarded it through violently political and economic impact. The Kriya pada is in essence considered to be parallel to if not identical with the yajnas of the Vedas. Temples have *yagasalas* which come into prominence at the commencement of any festival or even ritualistic *abhisheka;* the chief of them being the *Kumbhabhiseka*, the construction of the temple, installation of the deities and their consecration.

But the very many *yagas* (sacrificial rituals) conducted all over the country are different; they are not sanctioned by the Agamas. Many perform what are called *Ganapati homa*, *Chandi yajna* and many others. These seem to be tantraic in character and are not envisaged in the Agamas.

The *Kriya* aspect so far as temple *parartha* worship is concerned is in three divisions – a. *karshana* to *pratisthantam*, that is from ploughing the ground for examining its suitability for temple construction, to consecration; b. *pratishtha* to *utsavantam*, that is from consecration upto the conduct of all types of festivals; and

c. *prayascitta kriyas* i.e., expiatory rites combined with other purificatory rituals.

With this preamble we shall look at the available kriya padas in the agamas. The Kriya part is generally the largest part in all the available agamas. (Some details are here given under the two agamas *Karana* and *Suprabheda*). This part is concerned with worship, both individual worship and temple worship. All the aspects of worship are very elaborately described here. There seems to be no aspect which is beyond the purview of the *kriya pada* so far as puja or ritualistic congregational worship is concerned.

Many of the larger agamas have chapters on the *tantravatara* and the *mantravatara*. The *tantravatara* narrates at length details about the principal agamas, their revelation, the disciples to whom they were revealed, the number of verses, their upagamas and other similar details, in short the descent on earth of the agamas. The *mantravatara* deals with the *mantras*, their *svarupa* (real form), *bija* (mystic syllable, which is an essential part of the particular mantra which is pleasing to the deity concerned) the *panchakshara* and its various forms, of syllabic arrangement, order, the *bija mantras* for the several deities, the *anga mantras* and similar matters, all pertaining to the mantras. This aspect, namely worship is no doubt the major subject dealt with in the *kriya pada*.

But there are several other equally important subjects which are also dealt with extensively. As an instance, we may mention temple architecture. The details of temple construction here given are beyond what an excellent modern architect can dream of. (This subject alone needs to be dealt with in a separate volume.) Other allied subjects dealt with here are sculpture, iconography, construction of the temple car, geology, horticulture, astronomy, town planning, home science, water supply, health and hygiene, food, and many others. In short we may say, no area of human activity of the period about 2000 years back has been left out.

15. THE CHARYA PADA

The seeker after Truth or the aspirant, the *siddhantin*, has to equip himself intellectually for the philosophy of *jnana pada*. The spiritual effort is augmented and supported by the many kriyas, temple worship and festivals. For these efforts an external aid

both in himself and in the environment is essential. This is the code of personal conduct and discipline, the way of behaviour or funtioning and this is *charya*. The charya part is not a difficult one nor is it very complicated either for understanding or for following. It is a sort of rudimentary preparation, intended to purify and equip the *sadhaka* in body, mind and spirit, a personal training or discipline. The path chalked out for him is the godward path, because as a *sadhaka*, one who practises the means for attaining oneness with Siva, he is the cynosure of all eyes. He has in a limited sense to begin with, to lead others. Society looks up to him and by his personal life, affiliations, behaviour and progress and attainments, he sets the model. Human life being what it is there may be some leniency or laxity in the *charya pada*, although the kriya pada is very strict in all its observances allowing for no slackness or exemptions.

The charya pada deals with the daily observance and the personal discipline of the worshippers. Of the available three agamas, only the *Suprabheda* agama deals elaborately with it. The purificatory ceremonies for the individual from the time of his birth, the *dikshas* (initiation), the ultimate funeral rites and similar other ceremonies are described here.

16. THE YOGA PADA

The *Tamil* siddhanta sastras always follow a natural path of evolution in detailing with the four padas and here they have the order charya, the first simple stage, the kriya the second stage of strict observance and advanced ritualism, then the yoga pada the path of fixing the mind at the feet of the Supreme Guru, and lastly the jnana pada the path of leading one to final knowledge, realization and union. This might appear to be the natural process of evolution. But however the agamas do not have the padas in this order but have them in the reverse order generally, beginning with the realized state and landing last on the elementary beginner's stage. But even here the three padas, yoga, kriya and charya are not given in this order but in many different ways. Without concerning ourselves with these arrangements, we shall here confine ourselves with the yoga path as next after the jnana path.

The agamas were not the first to speak of the yoga nor even

Patanjali. Vedic writers would say that the yoga path is as old as the Vedas. They would claim that the *yajnas*, sacrifices, were themselves a sort of yoga practice where the vedic seer tried to unite himself with the particular celestial who was invoked. *Yagnavalkya smriti* says that Hiranyagarbha first expounded the yoga. Patanjali perhaps culled some of the yoga concepts prevalent in the earlier days and drew up his Raja yoga. The Ṭamil saint Tirumular (5th century A.D.) mentions a large number of yogas not referred to by others at all. Hence it is clear that many schools of yoga had existed in the past. Patanjali's yoga is based on the thoughts of the Samkhya. He reduced to the human level what the Samkhya said at the cosmic level. He gives a methodical course for control of the body and the mind. But the agamic yoga pada goes beyond Patanjali's raja yoga and lays down an inner discipline. The aim of yoga is of course jnana. Hence this yoga seeks to purify, elevate and equip the disciple for a life which will exemplify the Truths realised through jnana.

The *Ashtanga yoga* and the *Praasaada yoga* which is peculiar to Saiva siddhanta are dealt with in a separate chapter (19).

It is usual in the modern day to speak of raja yoga, bhakti yoga, karma yoga and jnana yoga in treating of religious practices. Different sects evolve their own terminology and this terminology cannot be expected to be there in the same form in Saiva siddhanta. But the concepts are there fully. All the four padas in *siddhanta* are superstructures on the foundation of *bhakti* and what is understood by the term karma yoga pervades the charya and the kriya padas. Raja yoga pervades the kriya and the charya padas while what is called the jnana yoga pervades the vidya pada and the yoga padas. The siddhanta can thus he seen to work out its own synthesis of the various concepts and practices.

The yoga pada, however, seems to be the scantiest part in the agamas. Only the *Suprabheda*, the *Kirana* and the *Mrgendra* texts are available on this pada, as well as on the charya pada. The treatment here is not on the *ashtanga yoga* or the *praasaada yoga*, but only on *nadi* (ducts or organs of breath) and *kalai*. Some aspects of yoga are also found interwoven into the various sections of the kriya pada.

The agamas deal with the different aspects of temple and temple worship and these aspects are called *kalas*. They are three in number: the *tantra kala*, dealing with the temple construction,

making of the icons, their forms etc.; the *mantra kala*, dealing with installation and consecration and the *upadesa kala* dealing with the philosophical tenets which help the devotee in ultimate emancipation from earthly bonds. The three kalas roughly correspond to the charya, the kriya and yoga, and the jnana padas respectively.

17. PHILOSOPHY IN THE AGAMAS

The Saivagama philosophy is a theistic one and so it is inseparably connected with religion. Yet it can be seen to present a separate and distinct philosophy of *advaita*, different from the Sankara school. In this philosophy, the reals or categories are 36, distributed as 24 in *atmatattvas*, 7 *vidya tattvas* and 5 *suddha tattvas*. The bedrock of this philosophy is the Satkarya vada, ie., a doctrine of causation according to which the effect is contained in the cause itself.

Here the Absolute is Siva in whose presence the five processes go on - creation, maintenance, dissolution, obscuration and liberation. Creation does not mean creation out of any void. Maya is the material cause out of which the *tanu*, *karana*, *bhuvana* and *bhoga* - body, organs, objects of enjoyment and enjoyment itself- are created. There are three entities – *Pati* (Siva), *pasu* the individual souls and *pasa*, all of whom are eternal and co-existent. Siva is the instrumental cause and He helps the souls to develop each according to its own nature governed by *karma*. His direction is always for good, though occasionally it may seem to cause suffering. Siva has no physical body and His body is only the mantra body. God is not the creator of the souls or their bodies, but He only directs the proper karma to attach itself to the souls in order that they may gain experience. Liberation is so planned that it can be attained only through individual effort. He acts through His Mahesvari sakti (Tirodhana sakti) which helps the soul towards liberation. Consciousness always abides in the soul but is obscured by *mala*.

The Grace of God falls on it at the appropriate time and it gets liberated. The karma of each individual remains embedded in *prakrti* and it produces effects by the category of *niyati* (or order, one of the categories under *vidya tattva*). The entire process is a divine design but by the arrangement of the categories and the

soul's effort, guided by the sakti, it unfolds itself as a natural course. Karma is experienced and reduced to naught, not necessarily in one birth but may be in several births.

18. SOME FEATURES OF THE KRIYA PADA

We shall here direct our attention to a few subjects other than *puja*. The first will be Town-planning. At the period the Agamas were put down on palm leaves, Tamilnad had different dynasties functioning from different cities and Tamil classics like *Silappadhikaram*, *Manimekhalai* and *Perumkathai* give us considerable detail regarding the manner in which capital cities were planned at the period. No wonder the agamas also interested themselves in this field.

Elements of astrology play a prominent part in all the aspects of *kriya*. An auspicious point of time is to be chosen in the *Uttarayana* half year, corresponding to January 15 to July 15. Certain *thitis* are preferred as also certain *nakshatras*. Omens are also attended to. The characteristics of the site chosen are examined and the site accepted or discarded. A ploughing of the site helps in the determination of its characteristics or suitability for construction of house or temple. Selection of the bulls is also discussed. After choosing the site, the layout of the town is planned in several types. Siva temples are to be in the middle of the town, Vishnu in the west, Ganapati in the southwest or a similar direction, and so on. Quarters for the different sections of the community are assigned separately. Each section of the town gets its name as *agrahara, grama, nagara, pattana, senasthana* etc. depending on the nature of the people distibuted to live there. Often the streets are laid out in concentric rows around the temple or the king's palace.

Architecture gets very elaborate treatment in the major agamas. This concerns not only the construction of temples but also palaces and the citizen's houses. The various mandapas, sub-temples, prakaras, vimanas, gopuras are dealt with in detail, from the foundation to the tip of the *sikhara*. The *vimanas* vary as circular, square, *gajaprishtha* etc. The *garbhagriha* also varies as circular, square, rectangular etc. Regarding palaces, the audience hall, ramparts and bastions, soldier's quarters and the like are discussed. In the matter of ordinary houses, the layout of the house, its drawing room, bedroom, puja room, kitchen and similar other apartments

are elaborately given a location to suit comfortable living. The rule that the bed room should face south is one which is relevant even in the modern day.

Iconography is another subject which has full scope here. Stone figures and copper and bronze icons are discussed. Measurements for each figure and the relative sizes of all the images are given. Rules for the installation and consecration of the images, their weapons and their mounts and the conduct of festivals - daily, seasonal and annual, are exhaustive.

19. YOGA IN SAIVA SIDDHANTA

The *yoga* in Saiva Siddhanta has a totally different significance from what is generally understood about the term. Many lines of yoga are mentioned by learned pandits, such as *hatha yoga, raja yoga, kundalini yoga* and the like. Yoga has been said to be as old as the Vedas. It is said to signify the path by which the vedic sages ceaselessly endeavoured to have a vision of the Supreme and realise It. It is also believed that Patanjali's raja yoga was only formally propounded by him and that it existed from the earliest times. This may indeed be true. But the yoga of Saiva Siddhanta and the Agamas is however different.

Patanjali's yoga takes one through eight steps and these are known as the *Ashtanga yoga*. The Ashtanga yoga consists of the eight steps - *yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana* and *samadhi*. It is only a course of spiritual discipline leading to a higher purpose, only steps leading to an altogether higher goal.

A word may be said about each of these. These are eight kinds of mental and moral disciplines, (as well as physical). The first two, *yama* and *niyama* indicate the preliminary ethical preparation for one who desires to tread the path, the *yogi*.

Yama in short is abstention from killing, untruth, theft, incontinence and greedy possession. Non-killing is the Gandhian *ahimsa* or Non-violence. Non-killing is one feature emphasized by Jainism and Buddhism. In positive terms it is love.

Niyama is the observance of a purity of body and mind, contentment, austerity, study of the sacred books and prayer. These two, *yama* and *niyama* constitute the moral training of the aspirant.

The next three are physical accessories in yoga. *Asana* is the

posture suitable for meditation. As against the west, Indian yogic *asanas* concentrate on the nerves more than on the muscles. They concern themselves with the internal organs and glands than with the mere skeleton or shape and they consider the flexibility of the spinal column the basis for health and vitality.

Pranayama is regulation of breath. It is a course of simple controlled respiratory exercises which cleanses the lungs, steadies the heart, helps to purify the blood, and tones up the whole system. *Pranayama* is a pre-requisite for every religious ritual in Hindu life.

It consists of three stages: *puraka* - inhalation of the breath, *kumbhaka* - retention of the breath in the lungs for a few seconds, and *recaka* - slow exhalation.

Pratyahara is withdrawing of the senses from the outward objects, i.e. shutting the mind against all impressions from the outside world. These steps, we may take it, have helped to bring under control the aspirant's body, senses and mind.

The last three steps are said to comprise the true raja yoga. *Dharana* is concentration. This ultimately helps to perfect mind control. *Dhyana* is meditation which helps the uninterrupted flow of thought to the object of devotion. This finally leads to *samadhi* where the mind initially functions in the contemplation, but finally it ceases to exist, so to say, where the aspirant or the contemplator and the contemplated merge into one. The initial state here confers *siddhis* or powers on the practiser of yoga, but he is not to be lured by them. He ignores these and goes to the higher stage of samadhi which is a mystic union.

Yoga is union, the union of the conscious individual self with the Universal Self. The term yoga is used in common parlance as a form of personal discipline: this yoga is just a means towards the attainment of a higher purpose. In religious language it is the union of the mind at the feet of the Master. The Saiva Siddhanta yoga is known as praasaada yoga, one which confers supreme realisation. It is a process of spiritual evolution where the individual soul goes through a sixteen fold process of inward perception withdrawing the spirit from all outward activities and rising higher and higher in the realisation of the Self inwardly and finally attaining non-dual union with it.

The Ashtanga yoga is not anything new. In the history of Tamil literature, there is enough evidence to show that what is

now called the Ashtanga yoga had been in existence in the Tamil nad independent of Sanskrit treatises.

Now this eight-fold ashtanga yoga is taken as a step or steps to a higher yoga in Saiva Siddhanta which seeks a spiritual union beyond the mental disciplines and it is called the *Praasaada yoga.*[1] This is a sort of training for the latent power in the *Sushumna nadi* called *Kundalini sakti*, which is like a coiled serpent and for taking it through sixteen stages called *kalas;* they are *medha kala, arghisa kala, visha kala, bindu, ardhachandra, nirodhi, nadam, nadantam, sakti, vyapini, vyomarupai, anantai, anata, anasritai, samanai* and *unmanai*. Beyond *unmana* is the *brahma randra* the *dvadasanta* centre. Here the texts describe the pervasion, angula, matra, form, colour, tattvas, devata and for some, sunya. The aspirant in his yogic practice, takes the Sakti to each stage and there, has the corresponding vision. This process is the *shodasakala prasaada yoga.*[2] The last stage is the merger or union.

The 16 *odukkam* or chambers in the Dharmapuram math were considered to be the chambers where disciples of the head pontiff there practised the *praasaada kalaa yoga* in the 16 different stages of realization. But now no one practises them nor does one know anything about them there.

20. SYNTHESIS IN THE AGAMAS

A social synthesis in the Agamas has been referred to elsewhere. The Vedas are generally understood to be thrown open only to the elite, the brahmins. Although the *kshatriyas* and the *vaisyas* put on the sacred thread like the brahmins, they had not had the privilege of the study and practice of the vedic cult in the day to day life. Thus there had been a rift or cleavage in society, the two *varnas* not practising the Vedas. We need not mention the position of what were called the *sudras* in the Aryan hierarchy of *varnas*.

But for one thing, this four *varna* hierarchy did *not* prevail in Tamilnad, which was guided from the early periods by the Agamas. The agamas could be studied by men and women of all

1. Praasaada yoga is dealt with in *Prasada chandrika* and *Prasada shadsloki* and some agamas in Sanskrit and also in about half a dozen treatises in the Tamil language from the 14th century.

2. *Kala: Shodasa* is 16; sometimes it is 12 and even less number of *kalas*.

castes (not *varnas*). More important, since all the castes were temple-goers and worshippers, they were in a sense practising the agamas. To give a well known example, the *stapatis*, those that were architects and sculptors, were well versed in the *Agama sastras* and the *Silpa sastras* and could even pull up the Sivacharya when he went wrong. In may be mentioned in passing that the Silpa sastras were mere elaborations or condensations of the Agama dhyana sloka etc. It will be a mere repetition to say that the stapatis were all good Sanskrit scholars themselves.

In short the Agamas did not merely theorise but were intimately concerned with life itself and involved themselves in the life of the common man, not only the elite and the very learned, and attempted to guide him and lead him forward spiritually.

The Vedic mantras had remained as mere sound, mere *agni* rituals. But the Agamas had developed the mantra concept and had helped to give form and shape to the mantra concept, when temples were constructed and images were installed. From the abstract, the agamas led man to the concrete, so that his senses could have the satisfaction of perception and grasp, along with faith. Art was added on and there was a complete harmonious and integrated fulfillment in all fields, physical, intellectual and aesthetical.

The Agama synthesis is not a mere jumble of many thoughts, teachings and ancient traditions. Its four parts effect a synthesis of the whole life of man, and of man and society. Its *jnana* part provides a satisfying and even a compelling understanding of the aim and purpose of life, the Intention of life. In Saivism it is to work out a divine purpose, the divine purpose of shedding all impurities and reaching an oneness through self-effort, of course under God's guidance. The systematic presentation of this *jnana* aspect has its own metaphysics and its own philosophy.

These are accompanied by steps taken to put them into practice and this is the *agamic yoga,* which translates the higher philosophy into practice. The *guru* is most important in this yoga, which seeks to purify Life and uplift it for effective realization.

Man is a member of society; he influences it and in turn is influenced by it. He is just a unit in a great organisation. Education of single units will ultimately result in the education of the aggregate society. A congenial and mentally helpful interplay has to be evolved between man and the group. The mass mind

is never attracted by the absolute but wants something concrete to grasp. This is provided by the rituals and ceremonies which are the *kriya pada*. These are of course only the outer shell but these in turn direct the mind of the individual in his own proper time to the inner core. Congregational worship has a powerful stimulating effect and power of invocation which had been recognised by society in the past but unfortunately lost sight of by modern society. The atmosphere gets charged, each individual contributes to the charge and at the same time he also absorbs strength and nourishment from the total and the general.

Charya pada is a personal discipline, consisting of rules and modes of conduct which are calculated to purify him externally and prepare him for an internal purification. The *charya* is itself a *tapas*, governing the ordinary mortal ways, the *pasutva* of man.

The whole is a lofty structure, responsible for all that is best and lasting in society and life; the attempt to pull down values in all the paths or in any one path will ultimately endanger not only religion and philosophy, but the whole architectonics of a cultured society. The synthesis has to be recognized and upheld.

Only this recognition and adherence can ultimately lead every individual man to the state mentioned by St. Manikkavacakar: "I have become mature and ripe even like the tamarind fruit, which now no longer clings to the shell." The same thought is expressed by the sage Vasishta in the Sanskrit language:

OM Trayambakam yajamahe
sugandhim pushti vardhanam
Urvaruham iva bandanat
mrityor mukshiya mamrutat.

"We adore the Father of the three worlds, Tryambaka, the Three- eyed One, the increaser of fullness and strength. May I be detached from Death like the cucumber from its stem, but not from Immortality."

When we are speaking of an agamic synthesis in the disciplines of the *sadhaka*, we would like to point out to a similar feature already there in the disposition of the Trimurtis in the Siva temple. The Trimurtis are Siva, Vishnu and Brahma. We find the three installed on the southern, western and northern *goshtas* of the Siva temples, on the outer wall of the *garbha griha*. Siva as *Dakshinamurti* is installed under the *kallal* tree, with his four

disciples, the sages Sanaka, Sanatana, Sanandana and Sanat kumara. On the west, we have usually the *Lingotbhava* form (the form of Siva whose crown could not be reached by Brahma who flew up as a swan to find it, and whose feet could not be reached by Vishnu who dug into the bowels of the earth as a boar to find it). But in many temples there is installed in the place of Lingotbhava the form of Vishnu with four arms and the Chanku and Chakra. On the north, in a *goshta* exactly above the *gomukhi*, which leads out the *abhisheka* water from the *sanctum* there is installed the four faced form of *Brahma*, to whom legends would say there shall be no worship. This is with reference to the *parartha puja*. A similar synthesis does exist in the *atmartha puja* also in greater depth.

21. THE SADHANA

The *Sadhana* (i.e. the means and the path for release) has equal importance in the agamas. It may be recalled here that the *Sivajnana bodha sutras* (12) are grouped into four sections, *Pati, pasa, pasu* and the last *sadhana*. In the agamas, the *sadhana* consists of three essentials – the particular Deity, the Mantra and the *Guru* who introduces these. At the time of the *diksha* and the imparting of the Siva puja, the *guru* asks the disciple to choose his own *murti* or *ishta devata*, which is some form of Siva, one of the 25 manifest forms of Siva, or one enshrined in any of the well known temples. He extracts a vow from the disciple that he would continue to perform the Siva puja of the particular deity daily without fail to the last day of his life. The particular deity has its own form and *aura* handed down through centuries of tradition and worship. By meditation, puja and reciting of the verses of worship and prayer taken from the Saiva hymns, the form comes alive to the worshipper and in time he achieves an intimate contact and identification with it.

The second essential is the *mantra*. The mantra is principally the *panchakshara* but the guru at the time of the *diksha* alters and combines the five syllables of the mantra in a form and order he considers suitable for the present state in the evolution of the disciple. The mantra consists of four parts. The first is of course the *pranava*, *OM*, the second is the *bija mantra* of the deity worshipped, the third is the form of the *panchakshara* mentioned

above, and the last is the word *namah* which means 'I salute.' Without the *pranava*, the primordial sound *OM*, no mantra for any deity is valid. The *bija mantra* is the most important. *Bija* is seed. Here it consists of a single sound represented by one voiced letter ending in *m*. This is different for the different deities and consists in essence of a sound or syllable which is the principle of the form. It pleases the deity and makes it come down to the disciple at the time of invocation and puja.

The third or the primary essential is the *Guru*. In Saiva thought, Siva Himself is considered to have come down on earth in *this* form for the guidance and redemption of *this* disciple. "Guru is Siva, taught my master" says Tirumular (1581). The guru is considered to be in partial communion with the Lord Siva through his own *sadhana* and practices. He implants the mantra along with his own personal spiritual dynamism into the disciple. It is the guru's grace that causes the progress of the disciple in the chosen spiritual path towards the final goal. Achievement or attainment depends on the spiritual fervour and practice of the disciple and God's grace no doubt,but the guru's initial *upadesa* and identity lead the disciple a long way in the path. The guru may come in a line of preceptors originally descended from Kailas through instruction by Siva Himself. The disciple is not to question the competency of the present guru because he is only a link in the chain of distribution of Divine Grace and the great knowledge passes through him as it were, like an electric current through a cable.

The whole mantra is the sound body of the deity; 'mantra is the body' say the sastras. The deity present in the guru, the mantra of the deity and the *diksha* all invest the guru with a transcendental divinity which illumines the novice and helps to lead him on along the chosen path. The agamas attach great importance to all these essentials of the Saiva Sadhana. The Sivalinga that is worshipped is the material image of the Supreme and is the basis for external worship. To look upon the linga as a mere piece of stone, to look at the guru as the human being Mr - so-and-so, and to consider the mantra as just a variation of the five syllables *na ma si va ya* - these are most profane and irreligious and will not certainly help to uplift the sadhaka. There is no place here for cold reason but these are to be looked at through faith in tradition, faith in revelation and faith in God. The very term agama means revelation

and no wonder faith is inherent in revelation. The tools of knowledge in all Hindu philosophy are three-pratyaksha or personal knowledge (perception), anumana or inference, and agama or authentic utterence or revelation. Faith is inherent in taking the third item as a tool for knowledge. Sadhana proceeds on this faith.

22. THE GITA AND THE SIDDHANTA

The Agamas, it is said, aim at a happy synthesis of the spiritual experiences of the Vedic hymnists, the philosophic content of the Upanishads, and again, the sacrificial rituals of the Brahmanas. There is here a monism or rather a mono-theism, which now stands for Siva. The disciple is ultimately developed to the extent of seeing a complete identification of himself, with his deity, Siva. Gita also is said to aim at a synthesis but the Agamic synthesis represents a new and developing system which influences the entire life in its sweep. Man the thinker, the doer and the soul are all comprehensively contained in the agamic sweep. This is more in consonance with the purpose of life than the comprehensiveness of the Gita.

Speaking about the Vedas we shall do well to remember certain reservations generally made by the Saiva acharyas. Surya bhatta (of the 14-15th centuries) makes this aspect clear. He says at the end (sixth *parichcheda*):

Paschat pasutva pakartham vihitachara
vedamsah siddhantibhih tyajyah,
Karmskanda kamya karmavadah,
Upasana kanda panchakshara viruddha
vidyantaropasana vadah,
Jnana kanda paramatmaikyadi jnana vadah,
Siddhantam tu sarvam evam sah samsevyah.[1]

"The rites prescribed in the Vedas for the conditioning of the pasuhood of the souls are to be ignored by the Siddhantin. They are: in the *karmakanda*, the performance of *kamya karmas;* in the *upasana kanda*, *vidya* placed higher than the *panchakshara mantras;* and in the *jnana kanda*, the absolute identity between the Paramatma and the jivatma. These are to be eschewed. All the matter in the Siddhanta (i.e., the agama) is to be accepted and followed."

1. *Saivasiddhanta Paribhasha*, Sanskrit edition page 39.

This is not the place to elaborate on this subject but yet this deserves particular mention and this would lend support to the view that the Agama has a large amount of non-Aryan or Dravidian element in it. This will also explain the Siddhantin's refutation of the *Gita*. *Sivajnanasiddhiyar*, the most elaborate of the (Tamil) Siddhanta sastras would dismiss the *Gita* calling its "text for killing." The other two scriptures of the *Prasthana-traya*-the Vedas (i.e. the *Upanishads*) and the *Brahma sutras*-are acceptable to the Siddhantin while the *Gita* is not. This is quite a fundamental concept that has to be accepted.

In a philosophy where there is only the Supreme Reality and where all else is illusion, mere *maya*, the teaching of the *Gita* may be fully relevant. Its ultimate teaching crystallises into this: "So long as there is life action is unavoidable. None can exist without action. But the world and life in it are transitory and sorrow-laden; so the individual has to make the best use of it for his own moral and spiritual advancement. This can be achieved only by a progressive and conscions surrender to God. Though he continues to function in the world it is for the sake of others and it is because he is in the embodied state and because he is a member of society. Life is the means for self-advancement in the spirit. By itself it is not anything to be cherised or enjoyed. Life is to be lived and tolerated for fulfilling an ulterior purpose. It has no purpose in itself."

On the other hand, the agama school looks at life from a different perspective. God, here, the perfect and the fountain of all mercy and compassion, has created life, and man is not to run away from it or reject it. God is all bliss, *ananda*, and the world His creation is also capable of leading man towards this *ananda*. Life is not opposed to *bhoga*. Even through this *bhoga*, man can grow to his fullest height in the conscious performance of God's will on earth. This is a duty and rare privilege and hence the Tamil saints have sung that "I am not afraid of being born" (*Tiruvacakam* 5.2) and "birth as a human being is to be welcomed" (St. Appar 4.81.4). The very concept of God as Siva and Sakti shows the individual his goal through even this earthly *bhoga*, through a stern disciplin therein by an understanding of his own inner life and outer social collective life of genuine action on the physical, mental, moral and spiritual planes. Creation is not without a purpose. It is indeed a source of joy. But this joy is not mere worldly *bhoga*.

He is expected to sublimate it into one of joy in service to God and godly men and it is here that the joy multiplies. Hence it is that the Siddhantin differs from the *Gita* and finds joy in God's work. Action is not devoid of joy here. Though he merely dedicates himself to the service, the attitude is one of joyous surrender and action, not of resignation. This makes all the difference. The *siddhanta* accepts the *Gita* concept of action without any anxiety for the fruits thereof, but weaves into it a spirit of service and joy which is the outcome of its own theistic philosophy.

That such a discerning philosopher and painstaking scholar like Dr. Das Gupta remarks, that a large part of the agamas do not have philosophical value is only because all the agamas have not been made availabe to orientalists in original in the *nagari* script, nor have any authentic translations been published in English so far. As he himself has conceded, the *vidya pada* is a distinctive section in the agamas, it is quite extensive and it enunciates the Siddhanta philosophy.

23. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AGAMAS

Siva the Absolute has no form or body. In the Saiva religion, mantras are deemed to constitute one form of the body or abode of Siva. These 28 Agamas form the various parts of that mantra body of Lord Siva. The *Kamika* is the feet, *Yogaja* the two ankles, *Chintya* the toes, and so on up to *Siddha*, the forehead; Santana, Sarvokta, Paramesvara, Kirana and Vatula are respectively the earrings, sacred thread, pearl necklace, ornaments and garment. The Kamika and the other major agamas give these details in the *tantravatara*[1] chapter. (Vide the Table of the 28 Agamas appended.)

Thc *Kamika* and the *Karanagama*[2] devote separate chapters to the enumeration of the agamas, their revelation, the disciples to whom they were taught, the aspects of Siva which taught them, the part of the mantra body of Siva which they represent, the

1. The *tantravatara* is the title of a chapter in several agamas. It deals only with the revelation of the agamas in general; this has nothing to do with the *tantra* which is associated with the Sakta-cult. The term *tantra* is taken to mean 'protecting those who go to it'.

2. The major agamas always give an account of the revelation of the agamas in their introductory part.

number of granthas[1] or verses in each, and the upagamas which are derived from the agamas. Occasionally there is a difference in the names, but generally the particulars are identical.

The Saivas, who accept the Vedas, hold that these also had been revealed by Siva. There is a school of thought which believes that the Isana countenance of Siva revealed all the 28 agamas, while the other four countenances, Tatpurusha, Aghora, Vamadeva and Sadyojata revealed the Rik, Yajus, Sama and the Atharva Vedas. Srikantha says; "We do not perceive any difference between the Vedas and the Agamas. The Saiva does not see any conflict between the Veda and the Agama. The Veda is the Sivagama." Students of Saiva Siddhanta know the familiar Tamil verse mentioned earlier: "The Veda is the cow; the Sivagama is its milk; the hymns of the four Acharyas its essence butter" and so on. For the Saiva Siddhantin, both the Vedas and the Agamas have scriptural authority, but when later, polemical writers sought to restrict the significance of the Vedas according to their own line of thought, the Agamic writers defined in clear language their own attitude towards the Vedas: "The Saiva Siddhantin has to ignore the rituals laid down in the *Karma kanda* of the Vedas, performed for a definite purpose (i.e., *kamya karma*) the several *vidyas* mentioned in the *Upasana kanda* thereof, which are in conflict with the supremacy of the Panchakshara mantra and the part in the *Jnana kanda* dealing with the absolute identification of the jivatma and the Paramatma. The other parts of the Vedas are to be fully adopted by the Saiva Siddhantin just like the Agamas."[2]

24. APPARENT CONTRADICTIONS

The contents of the Agamas vary in their emphasis with reference to their approach to the philosophy and to the class of persons for whom they were intended. *Paushkara*, *Mrgendra* *Matanga* etc., are general and they deal with the bound souls and so these are considered to be the ones of a general nature. Some others like *Sarvajnanottara* deal with the persons in a realized stage intent upon *mukti* and so they are said to give out the tru

1. Grantha is a couplet in Sanskrit, having 32 letters (or syllables) in tw lines of verse.

2. *Saiva Siddhanta Paribhasha* of Surya Sivacharya, Sanskrit Editio 1929, page 39., quoted on page 41.

knowledge or the particular characteristics. Hence it is contended that *Sarvajnaanottara* should not be interpreted on the lines of *Mrgendra* and so on.

Again *Paushkara* and the others were taught to the sages, while *Sarvajnanottaram* etc. were taught to Skanda, Ganapati and similar others. The former are in a stage of lesser evolution than the latter and so the enunciation intended for the latter cannot apply to the former.

All contradictions are to be understood in this light. The Vedas and the Agamas are not contradictory. In the words of St. Umapati and St. Sekkilar, the Agamas are the essence of the Veda and there is no contradiction between the Upanishad (the Vedanta) and the Agama.

Similarly also the number of entities mentioned in the different agamas *Svayambhuvam* would say the entities are seven, *Paushkara* and *Matanga* would say they are six, *Sarvajnanottaram* four and *Rauravam* and *Mrgendram* would say the entities are three – Pati, Pasu and Pasa. All the entities mentioned by the others are here grouped under the ultimates three, and hence there is no real contradiction.

Sivajnana swami says that the agamas were written to suit people with different frames of mind, at different stages of spiritual development and hence there may be differences so far as the *charya, kriya* and *yoga padas* are concerned. But in the *jnana pada*, since the entities and doctrines involved are the same there cannot be any real difference in the subject matter of the various agamas, and whatever differences may be apparent, will, in the ultimate analysis, be found to deal only with the three entities of Siddhanta. He also discusses at length how the Veda is a scripture general in charater, while the agama is specific in this, that it speaks not of a god but of Siva. He sees no difference between the two and observes that while the Veda is applicable only to the first three *varnas* (castes), the agama is applicable to all the four *varnas* and so possesses greater sanction.[1]

25. THE SAIVA SAMAYA ACHARYAS AND THE AGAMAS

Tirumular devotes ten verses to the agamas in the prefatory chapter to his *Tirumantiram*. Some of his statements may well be

1. *Sivajnana bhashyam* of Sivajnanaswami, Samajam edition.

extracted here: "The Agamas are 28 in number and they were revealed by Paramesvara from His five faces to the 66 sages. But it should be said that they were really 280 million and one hundred thousand agamas and 700 million verses. They were handed down from Siva to Sakti, from Sakti to Sadasiva, and so on, until nine agamas were handed down to Nandi, my guru. These nine are the Karana, Kamika, Vira, Chintya, Vatula, Yamala, Kalottara, Supra (bheda) and Makuta". In another place, he says: "The Veda and the agama are the true revelations of God. One is general, and the other particular, with special reference to Saivism. Both are His words. Some say the ultimate end they point to is different. But the more advanced souls do not see any difference".[1] From these lines, we know definitely that some of the principal agamas were much earlier than the age of Tirumular.

The *Devaram* hymns of Appar, Sambandhar and Sundarar make several references to the agamas. Sambandhar says that Siva revealed the Veda, the Vedanta and the Agama.[2]

Sekkilar makes many references to the agamas in his *Periya-puranam:* "The agamas were revealed by Siva. Temples are built according to the rules laid down in the agamas. Siva puja is performed according to the agamas and he is pleased with such worship".

We get the following picture of the authority and influence of the Sivagamas in the early periods, from the *Periyapuranam* of Sekkilar. "Tirumular has enunciated the four padas of the agama beginning from jnana in ihe Tamil language (3568). He has given out on earth in the Tamil language the substance of the agama given out by Siva (3591)."

"The ancient King Manuniti Chola arranged for the pūja of Siva after carefully studying the agamas (101)." Even the traitor Muthanathan, bent upon killing the saintly ruler Meyp-porul, says to the Queen: 'I have brought here a rare agama revealed by your Master, not to be found any where on earth' (478). In the story of Kannappar, Sivagochariyar, the saintly priest arrives at the temple, bringing flowers and water as laid down in the agama' (784). He being a Sivacharya performs the puja on

1. Tirumatiram verses 57, 58, 62, 63 and 2397. The number 280 million mentioned by Tirumular only means that the number of agamas revealed was very large.

2. Sambandhar Devaram 3. 23. 6.

agama lines (801, 804). St. Nilanakkar performs the puja according to the agama (1838). In the days of St. Naminandi, the king. seated on the throne, renders all endowments for the worship of the Lord at Tiru Arur, glorifying the Veda and the Agama scriptures (1889)."

Speaking about the temple built mentally by St. Pusalar, Sekkilar says that he laid the foundation according to the agama rules, and mentiones the *upana* (pedestal), the various layers of the pedestal, *sikhara* (crown)' the tower, the cubit measure employed, the stucco work, the temple well, sub-temples, the walls and the temple tank (4181).

Narrating the greatness of the city of Kanchipuram, Sekkilar says that Umadevi worshipped Siva in this place: in this context he specifically mentions several times that Umadevi performed Sivapuja as laid down in the agamas.

"Umadevi went to Kanchipuram to worship Siva, as ordered by Him. Before starting, she learnt the agamic worship from Siva Himself (1132), then went there and performed the worship and performed all the rituals as mentioned in the agamas revealed by Siva Himself (1133, 1134, 1136, 1141, 1142)."

Sekkilar lived in a period when a large number of temples were being built and consecrated to Siva. Puja rituals were apparently prescribed according to the agamas at the time. This is perhaps the reason for his particular care to mention the agamas in the context of worship. He further says that Tirumular had sung the substance of the agamas in the Tamil Language.

It may be remarked that not only Sekkilar but other authors also seem to make it a point to mention specifically agama worship. *Muppodum tirumeni tinduvar* is the phrase used by St. Sundarar to refer to the Sivacharyas, in his *Tiru-Tondattohai*. He says there he is the servant to these. Nambiyandar Nambi who lived in the days of Rajaraja I (985-1014) and who was responsible for the discovery and publication of the Devaram songs, mentions these Sivacharyas more elaborately in his *Tirut-Tondar Tiru antadi* which is only an elaboration of Sundarar's verses. "These persons touch Siva and perform His puja with the knowledge of the eternal agamas, on the three occasions of the day" (verse 74).

St. Manikkavacakar mentions the agamas. He says that Siva disclosed the agamas from the Mahendra hill out of His five faces (2: 20), that he recovered them from the fish which had swallowed

the text and hidden it (2, 18), and that appearing as the Agamas, He imparts bliss (1.4.) The reference to recovery from the fish is perhaps to a period before Manikkavacakar, when the agamas were forgotten and had gone into oblivion, and when Lord Siva had rescued them and given them a new currency among the Saiva people. This is quite possible. We find that the Saiva *Devaram* songs and the Vaisnava *Prabandham* songs had passed into obscurity for some centuries, after which they were rescued by the Grace of God, by Nambiyandar Nambi and Nathamunihal respectively and given fresh life. Manikkavacakar here says that the agama is Siva Himself[1] and that it confers bliss. The implication is that the agama is considered by him not merely as a manual of rituals but as a treatise on philosophy, leading one to final union with God.

Saiva samaya neri of Maraijnana sambandhar (16th century) deals with the agamas, their origin number of verses, subject matter etc. in about 20 verses[2] in the Tamil Language.

Some of the thoughts given in this book in addition to the usual details about the revelation of te agamas are the following: "Just as creation is different, so also the agamas appear different. Clear the place before commencing agama study and let the student purify himself also. Strew flowers on the agama before taking it up for study. Before commencing and at the close, let the student salute the feet of the guru". The following days are prohibited for agama study: the 14th day, 8th, the New moon and full moon days; the 1st day, days of eclipses, the three occasions of *sandhya* (morning, evening and noon) and other similar days which are taboo days of births and deaths in the house and days when the deity goes out in procession.

It may be recalled that this author had written a Tamil treatise called *Sakalagama saram* but it is no longer available.

26. LOSS OF AGAMAS

While we declare that the Sivacharyas have handed down agamas as a cherished preserve of theirs, we have also to admit that the Sivacharyas have been criminally responsible for the loss of

1. *Agama mahi ninru annippan tal valha – Tiruvacakam;* also cf.: 2.9 - 10.
2. *Saiva samaya neri,* verses 327-346.

the Agamas (and Upagamas) and their parts. From the early period of after Sankara, they were unable to shake off the glamour of the *Ekatmavada* (*Kevalatma vada*) cult. This was the cult of the *smartha* brahmins after Sankara and their influence was such that the ignorant among the Sivacharyas styled themselves just brahmins, went the full length of the Vedic *adhyayana* and tried to place themselves on a par with the *aham-brahmasmi* brahmins. This was a criminal and unforgivable betrayal of Saivism. The vedic brahmin and the agamic Sivacharya were entirely different from each other. But the latter, in his studied imitation of the former, neglected his own heritage and the Agamas were the loser in the process. At a particular stage in history, between the 14th and the 17th centuries, the agamikas relegated agamic studies to the background and went after Vedic studies and elaborate *agni karyas*. For their temple services and rituals these two were not absolutely essential but the craze blinded them to their own greater heritage. The result was that the agamas and agamic study got neglected. Many agama texts perished through non-study and non-copying when the older manuscripts got brittle and needed re-copying.

Further, the agamic study was kept as a rare preserve in the homes of the Sivacharyas. They never taught them to the others and when their own inclinations were towards brahminism, their own characteristic Siva culture languished. Their progeny could not get the best out of their earlier ancestor and so the agamic ritual continued as a mere formal ritual without its glorious soul. This was the real reason for the decay of the agamas and for the loss of the books themseleves.

Foreign aggression and suppresion of the native culture could not be said to be the cause for the loss of the agama books. When so many other books like the Vedas and the *Devaram* are available today, the loss of the Agamas cannot be explained except by the neglect of the agama custodians, the Sivacharyas themselves. From the history of Sivagama publication, it can be seen that the publication was due to the enterprising nature of non-sivacharyas. Excepting for the Archakar Association which came into existence in the second half of the 20th century for the cause of Agama publication, all the other publishers have been *bhaktas* and non-sivacharyas. If the Sivacharyas are today in a poorly state in society, it has to be said that they themselves are responsible for their state and none other.

27. INFLUENCE OF THE AGAMAS ON INDIAN LIFE AND THOUGHT

The influence of the Agamas on the life and thought of the people of India not only in the South but in the North also has been quite marked. It has been wide and deep. What was formerly vedic rites containing sacrifices (including animal sacrifices before the advent of the Buddha) had been totally metamorphosed by agamic concepts. Even apart from Buddhist preaching, the agamas, with their insistance on *jnana* as the supreme path for attainment of final bliss, had themselves played a significant part in doing away with animal sacrifices. The *jnana* part had dealt with only philosophy and its impact on rituals was equally profound. A considerable period before the advent of Saint Tiru Jnanasambandhar, the agamas had emphasised the oneness of all creation and had paved the way for the riddance of animal sacrifice in the land. They were a great force in the South and so foot hold for Jainism with its emphasis on non-killing was scarce in this part of the country, because non-killing was already there in Saivism, as one of its fundamental doctrines. A very small section of the Sakta group did indulge in rituals of a lower order including killing of animals but it was confined to the lower strata in the Hindu society and it was looked down upon by the more orthodox sects, which dismissed it contemptuously with the word *vamachara*.

Scholars have said that although the Vedanta of Sankara followed the Vedanta philosophy of the Upanishads, Ramanuja's theism was closer to the ideas of Badarayana in the Vedanta Sutras which showed a considerable influence of the Agamas. Srikantha Sivacharya, hailed by some as pre-Sankara but considered by the more conservative scholars to be a contemporary of Ramanuja, has written his own bhashya on Brahma Sutra with a Saiva slant. We need hardly mention that the Saiva philosophy both of Meykandar and of Srikanthacharya had an agamic core. 'Madhava is so much under the Agama influence that his Bhashya on the Brahma Sutras is but a string of agama texts with a few words thrown in here and there to connect them.'[1] No one need be apologetic about this because the agamas are the bulwark against which all theistic philosophy rests.

1. P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar, *Outlines of Indian philosophy*.

Temple ritual has been very ancient in South India. Ilango the well known author of *Silappadhikaram* mentions the Siva temple as 'the temple of the Great One who is never born' (in a mother's womb). We know Kochengat Chola built more than four scores of temples for Siva, in the 5th century A.D. The *Vimanas* of some of them are typically in the reclining posture of an elephant and he built them all on an artificial hillock. Hence they were called *madakkoil* (temple on a raised base). Saint Appar of the 7th century and Saint Tirumangai Alvar the Vaishnava saint a century later, have mentioned the numerous temples of this King.[1] Temple rituals were therefore in a very highly advanced and standardized state during that period. Some of the rituals are reminiscent of the earlier sacrificial rituals developed by the Vedic seers. The rituals were continued but sacrifices had been done away with. So we may say that two thousand years back the temples in Tamilnad witnessed a welding of the elements of the sacrificial worship elaborated in the Vedas, harmoniously with the inward worship, dealt with in the agamas.

One area of the influence of the agamas on Saiva society in general was the personal life and discipline of the individual householder. The aim of life then was the attainment of the four *purusharthas - dharma, artha, kama,* and *moksha.*[2] With this goal before him, everyone was disciplined to be a spiritual aspirant. The *charya pada* of the agamas lays down rules for a personal discipline. He has to get up early at dawn, have his bath, perform his puja in the house, then study the agamas and then go about his business. Rules for food and for rest are prescribed: these are generally not so many impositions but are rules of hygiene calculated to help the person to lead a healthy and disease-free life.

Study of the agama is very important. He should place the agama book wrapped in silk on a pedestal, perform a short puja for it, salute his spiritual preceptor mentally, and then open the book and study a few leaves therein.

When the agamas were written and the Siva temples grew up throughout the land, persons were needed not only to organise and perform the temple worship and festivals, but also to build

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1. Appar *Devaram* 6.71.5 and Tirumangai Alvar *Periya Tirumoli* 6.6.8.
2. We use these terms for convenience. They are respectively known as *aram, porul, inbam* and *vidu* in the Tamil language; the connotation of these Tamil concepts are much hig-her, more universal and eternal.

the temples according to a general pattern and design, to install the deities therein for worship and to consecrate them. Through several centuries before Christ, even before the Buddha, the special clan of temple priests in Tamilnad, known by several names such as the Siva brahmins, the gurukkal, the archakas, Adi Saivas and the Sivacharyas, gradually separated itself from the general community of the Tamil peoples and assumed leadership and authority in the matter of congregational worship in the temple, by its scholarship in the Vedas and the Agamas, its austere way of life, and its dedication. A very high standard of dedication and erudition in temple lore has been kept up by them for over three thousand years; so much so, that they had been hailed as the custodians of the temple cult, in all matters except finance, which had been the collective resposibility of the Saiva community around.

Besides a very rigorous personal discipline, a vast amonut of study is expected of a Sivacharya. Mastery of a hundred thousand *granthas* (verses) from the agamas is preseribed as the basic qualification for the spiritual preceptor, who is the Sivacharya. A unique position has been conceded to him in society. By virtue of the privilege of entering the *sanctum sanctorum* in the temple, of touching the linga murti there,[1] and of performing the congregational worship, i.e., worship for the welfare of the community around and of all mankind, his position is indeed an exalted one. It should be remembered that a member of what is generally known as the brahmin community, although spoken of as the very highest in society in the past, has not been given these privileges. Even the highest acharya of the brahmins is *strictly prohibited* from entering the *garbha graha* or sanctum sanctorum of the Siva temple; the question of his touching the Sivalinga does not arise.

A study of the Saivagamas in preference to all other religious books (including the Vedas) was considered very important for a Sivacharya and a spiritual aspirant: "The Lord's grace will descend on the students of the agamas, who revere Him in their heart; it is not accessible to book worms."[2]

It may again be emphasized that just as the philosophy of the Vedas is termed the Vedanta, the philosophy of the Agamas is

1. The samayacharya Sundaramurti (c. 700 A.D.) sings;: 'I am the servant of those who touch in Sivalinga murti thrice a day and perform puja' (7.39.10).

2. The Saiva canon (Tamil), Book 11, 32, 53.

termed the Agamanta. The Agamanta is Saiva Siddhanta, and it is also Advaita, with a difference. This is often called Qualified *Monism*. Upanishads and the Brahma Sutra have as much relevance in this philosophy as they do in Advaita. The Saiva sastras would call themselves 'the essence of the Vedanta'.

28. ANTIQUITY OF AGAMA INFLUENCE IN TAMILNAD

Tamil poetry of the period belonging to the birth of the Christian era is now available in substantial volumes. Though it does not mention Siva by name, His legendary exploits are referred to in detail and many particulars regarding worship are also availalbe from that poetry. The volumes of that poetry belong to a period from the third century B.C. to the second century A.D.

"King Karikala restored the temples in the Chola territory to their original condition.. No day passed in the market streets without festivals. Banners were flying at the gates....Many colourful banners waved in the wind, hoisted as part of the temple festivals.... the citizens had a ceremonial bath on the evening of the seventh day of the temple festival which was calculated to rid them of the effects of evil karma. They worshipped the family deties, fixing a lamp on an iron stand with an oiled wick, lighted the lamp and offered rice[1] and flowers in *archana*.. They offered *dhupa* (incense) sandal and flowers to the gods.. They prostrated before the gods with prayers and *dhupa* and flowers.. They offered *dhupa* and music..They offered to Muruha (Karthik or Subrahmanya son of Siva according to the Puranas, but in philosophy just another of His manifestations) sandal, *dhupa*, lamps which could not be snuffed out by the wind, fragrant flowers etc.... The women going to the River Vaigai carried *dhupa*, flowers, and *havis* for *aradhana*.... They performed *archana* to Muruha...." "May your umbrella bow before the temple of the three eyed One (Siva) when you perform a *pradakshina* of His temple" says a poet to a Pandya prince.

These are a few of the several references to worship, individual as well as temple worship. The references to His banner, temple *pradakshina*, festivals, *abhisheka* with water, sandal, flowers, *dhupa*, lamp, *aradana*, *archana* and *havis* do indicate the influence

1. Paddy is the word used in the text; evidently akshata is meant.

of the agamas in temple worship. These details were certainly not traces of Vedic worship nor due to Vedic influence. There is no worship in the Vedas other than *agni karya*. *Agni karya* is one of a hundered details in Siva worship according to the Agamas.

To organise worship on the above lines, the influence must have been at work several centuries earlier. Besides, we find that Karikala restored and rebuilt the temples ravaged by his foes. So the temples must have been very much earlier in origin. Summing up, we say that the agama influence was there in the Tamilnad even 2500 years back. The indication from the Mohenjadaro excavations that Saiva worship was there among the Tamils over five thousand years ago appears to be quite plausible even on other literary evidence.

The Saiva canon beginning with Tirumular and Karaikkal ammai (5th century A.D.) and *Silappadhikaram* (3rd century A.D.) give almost all the details regarding the agamic practices and rituals, but since we have restricted our observation to the texts now known as the classics of the Sangham age (3rd century B.C. to 2nd century A.D.) we have not drawn upon the later works.

29. RELEVANCE OF THE AGAMAS

When man learnt to worship a Power beyond himself, he naturally gave that power a form, because the mind cannot grasp anything that is formless or abstract. Temples around the form came to be built in course of time. This is true not only of Saivism but of all sects of what we now call Hinduism. Rules were laid down for the building of the temples and for the installation of images therein. Hindu philosophy has taught us that God is formless. But man had always to have a form to meditate upon and to reach through it to the Formless beyond. The Saiva had an image to worship in his temple, through which he sought to offer his worship to the transcendental formless One.

Temples of today are built and worshipped on the agamic lines. Puja or worship is of two categories, *atmartha* and *parartha;* the first is for the individual who does it usually in his home, the second is for the welfare of the community at large. Hence temple worship has a large part to play in the lives of the worshipping public. The temples had been growing in importance since the

days of the Saiva Samaya Acharyas-Sambandhar, Appar, Sundarar and Manickavacakai. The acharyas had glorified and sanctified in their devotional songs a very large number of temples throughout the Tamil speaking country, which they had visited with their followers. All ruling monarchs, particularly the Chola Emperors, from the 9th century to the 13th century, had been vying with one another not only in temple worship but also in temple construction. They had lavished all their riches on the temples and had practised a kind of religious socialism, not to be met with anywhere in history. Royal women like Sembiyan madevi, Kundavai and Lokamadevi had also played a large part in temple construction and administration. Hundreds of new temples were built. An external form and harmony, majesty and grandeur had to be evolved and observed, if such temples were really to be the abodes of the Almighty Being, and to offer spiritual solace to the worshippers. To suit the different tastes of mankind in the art world and in the thought world, variations had to be provided for in the temples, in full unison with the general concepts of sculpture, architecture and religion, and public usage. Hence some standards had to be evolved. Such standards were laid down by the agamas.

The agamas differed from one another in detail and treatment, but not in the essential principles, religion or philosophy. They do not contradict one another; their difference, both in matters of worship and in philosophy, lies only in emphasis. The difference is understandable if we remember that the seers and the acharyas who wrote them down, were realized souls; they wrote them down for the benefit of disciples and other true worshippers and seekers after Truth, when they returned to the normal state after periods of realization, for the guidance of these seekers; difference naturally resulted either because of the experience or through the recall and naturally through expression.

It is well known that most temples follow the *Kamika* or the *Karana agama* for practices of day to day worship, while the Nataraja temple at Chidambaram follows the *Makutagama;* the Tiruvenkadu temple follows three agamas – the *Kamika, Makuta* and *Karana.* General worship here follows the *Kamika* as elsewhere; worship of Nataraja follows the *Makuta*, and worship of Aghora murti (the form of Siva which is of special significance in this shrine) follows the *Karana.* The *Vatulagama* is said to be the authority for worship in the Tiru-Eengoy malai temple. The

Karana and the *Sukshma* are followed in Tiru-Nallam, where is enshrined the biggest image of Lord Nataraja.

The *Makutagama* seems to occupy a unique place among the agamas. It is quoted as the authority in temples where Nataraja is said to have performed one of His Cosmic Dances. In such shrines His *Ardra darsana* festival is considered to be of special significance. They have special dance halls known as the *Kanaka sabha* (gold-Chidambaram), *Rajata sabha* (silver-Madurai), *Tambra sabha* (copper-Tirunelveli), *Ratna sabha* (gem-Tiruvalankadu) and *Chitra sabha* (art-Tirukutralam). The dances of Nataraja are seven and they were performed in these and other places. The *Makutagama* deals specially with the dance of Nataraja and hence its appropriateness to these places of Nataraja.

We learn that this agama governs the worship in the Tiru-nallaru temple also. This temple is held to be of special significance to the planet Saturn (*Sani* in Tamil) whose baneful influence brought untold misery and suffering to Prince Nala, celebrated in the Sanskrit epic Mahabharata.

Although the Siva temples, follow the same pattern and layout, there are many differences in conception and construction. We shall give two examples here. The sanctum (garbha graha) is always square in shape. But very rarely there are some with a circular shape. Similarly, the tower on the sanctum is always circular; in the early Chola temples, these towers, called *vimana*, are very huge in size (as in Tanjavur, Gangai konda cholapuram, Darasuram, and Tiru Bhuvanam) and are square in shape. But there are a few, called the *gaja prishta*, which are like the form of a reclining elephant. Similarly, the *avudaiyar* of most of the Siva-lingas is circular in shape. A few are square. To understand these structures, agamic knowledge is necessary. Almost all of these were constructed more than a thousand years ago. Owing to the muslim onslaught and the British overlordship, the tradition of temple construction had been broken and naturally understanding also was on the wane. But however construction is now being revived on a large scale. To guide the architects and sculptures, the administrators and *archakas* expert knowledge is necessary. The agamas supply this knowledge and help in the renovation and reconstruction of temples. Besides, from a historical point of view, the agamas also help the study of the architecture and sculpture of the existing temples, helping us to understand their age, their

classification, the different styles of construction, the disposition of the various sub-tempies therein, the conduct of temple worship and festivals according to the different historical periods, ceremonies like consecration etc.

The plan of the temple, the layout with reference to local traditions and legends, the position of the very many sub-temples inside the walls with reference to available space, their size, the very construction including repairs and renovation, consecration, the forms of the deities, daily modes of worship, worship on special occasions, monthly and annual festivals, celebrations by individuals, the functions of the priests and their training, the temple tank, temple music and dance, flower garden, food arrangements – all these are regulated by the agamas. An elastic but effectively restraining code is indeed necessary in the temple, which is a public institution, dedicated to the welfare of a changing and developing society in order that it does not become a mere jumble of many incongruous and inharmonious parts, and to prevent any straying away from the original concepts of rituals and worship. Such a code was one aspect of the agamas, namely the *Kriya* and the *Charya pads.* The *Vidya* or *Jnanapada* was a deeper code which supplied the spiritual force and santion for all these externals. The *Yoga pada*, we should say, was more individualistic in character, in the nature of a spiritual discipline for the pious worshipper and the religious minded people and the earnest seeker after Truth.

Linguistic prejudices cloud our minds and very often even the enlightended amidst us believe that the Agamas, because they are written in Sanskrit, are alien to the Tamils. Far from it. The details of worship and temple consecration and the forms of the various manifestations of Siva are all only Tamilian in origin and character; they have nothing to do with what the Tamils call the North; such rich and all embracing spiritual and religious forms are totally lacking there. Perhaps the political turmoil in that land and the frequent invasions, massacre, plunder and destruction caused by the Muslims, and the like may be one important factor for the lack of deep religious forms there. Anyway, the fact remains that we do have today amidst us an unbroken tradition of a very rich religious and cultural legacy, not found elsewhere. The agamas are the bedrock which has been keeping it in form.

Amidst the many currents and cross currents of today's socio-political agitations, we would do well to remember that they have nothing particularly 'braminical' about them. Tirumular himself says that our temples can have nothing to do with brahminism.[1] The agamas have everything to do with the Saivas (Siva worhsippers) and Sivacharyas or Archakas, who had been given the privilege, in the words of St. Sundarar, of physical contact with the image of the Lord in the temple and of offering Him worship. In this context, a rethinking among the Saivas, that is, followers of the Saiva Siddhanta system, is necessary in the case of the agamas. They should come foward to claim the agamas as their own casting aside their meaningless prejudice against Sanskrit and Brahminism as it is wrongly called, a prejudice born of purely political considerations. The average Sivacharya, out of his ignorance today tries to identify himself with the smartha brahmin, who always keeps him out. This does not make him a brahmin. He was and is a Saiva, the *adisaiva.*

Besides, the Tamil Siddhanta Sastras have not said everything about the Saiva Siddhanta philosophy and where we find some lacuna, where further elucidation is necessary, and where many steps have not been explained, as for example in the case of the process of the evolution and the involution of the tattvas, a reference to the Agamas helps us to clear doubts, to supply further elucidation, and to have a better understanding of the philosophic concepts.

In the present day when there is a large awakening in matters of dance (*bharata natya*) and art, there is no other scriptural authority than the agamas to lay down the rules for temple dance and its parts such as mudras, musical instruments, and the like. We should remember, all classical dances have their origin in temple dances and the sanction for all the dances is contained only in the agamas. The Bharata sastra of Bharata came much later in point of time than the agamas; Bharata first wrote his sastra in Tamil and later wrote it in Sanskrit which was the lingua franca among all the learned people of the whole of India. The very concept of dance is Tamilian and the large number of *mudras* in the *natya*

1. Tirumantiram 519: The Lord has said that diseases will visit the ruler and famines will lay waste the land, if the brahmin performs temple worship.

have been bodily lifted from the agamic Siva *puja* where the spiritual significance continues to exist even to this day in the *atmartha* and *parartha pujas*. The *Bharata natya* has no purpose and has no meaning if it is intended merely to satisfy the senses and the sense of aesthetic pleasure and is not related to higher spiritual values. Dance was dedicated in ancient Tamilnad to Siva, to the Cosmic Dancer. Without such dedication, it becomes grossly material and degenerates in to the merely sensuous. Such dedication lifts it from the merely sensory and sensuous matter to a higher spiritual yearning. The grammar of true dance is given by the agamas and, within its frame work, the dance can well fulfil its higher purpose. Bharatacharya, the author of the *Bharata sastra* had his inspiration from the agamas. The ugly caricature of our ancient dance which we find on the public commercialized stage all around us today is only because the agamic basis had been ignored or taken away from these.

The relevance and popularity of Agamic study will be clear from a legend which states that Tiruchitrambala Desikar, the Head Pontiff of Tiru Avaduturai Mutt (in Tanjavur district) had mastered two hundred thousand *granthas* in the Saivagamas. (A grantha is a verse unit in Sanskrit in couplets where each couplet has 32 letters, ignoring unvoiced consonants.) One of the qualifications prescribed for an acharya (spiritual preceptor) is that he should have mastered a hundred thousand *granthas* (*slokas* or verses in the Agama text).

All that has been said so far is external in the matter of Agama relevance in modern society. But there is one fundamental aspect of the relevance of the agamas which is intrinsic and which is relevant not only to the modern society; it had been relevant during all periods of past history and will continue to be relevant in future history to the end of time and that is the concept of Grace. Grace is not mere compassion or kindness which is a natural human emotion on witnessing or visualizing another's suffering. It is what is called *nirhetukam*, mercy shown on the errant when the individual is not deserving of that mercy.

Das Gupta has some words to say on this subject: "The Karunikasiddhantins mentioned by Vacaspati have not been referred to by Madhva (fourteenth century) in his *Sarvadarsana samgraha*, and we do not find a reference to these in any of the Saivagamas. But from the statement of Saiva philosophy in the *Vayaviya-samhita*

of the *Siva-mahapurana*, it is not difficult for us to reconstruct the reasons which might have led to the formation of a special school of Saivism. We find that the doctrine of grace or *karuna* is not always found in the same sense in all the Agamas, in the *Vayaviya-samhita*, which was in all probability based on the Agamas. Ordinarily the idea of grace or *karuna* would simply imply the extension of kindness or favour to one in distress. But in the Saivagamas there is a distinct line of thought where karuna or grace is interpreted as a divine creative movement for supplying all souls with fields of experience in which they may enjoy pleasures and suffer from painful experiences. The *karuna* of God reveals the world to us in just the same manner as we ought to experience it. Grace, therefore, is not a work of favour in a general sense, but it is a movement in favour of our getting the right desires in accordance with our karma. Creative action of the world takes place in consonance with our good and bad deeds, in accordance with which the various types of experience unfold themselves to us. In this sense, grace may be compared with the view of Yoga philosophy, which admits of a permanent will of God operating in the orderliness of the evolutionary creation (*parinamakram -niyama*) for the protection of the world, and supplying it as the base of human experience in accordance with their individual karmas. It is again different from the doctrine of karuna of the Ramanuja Vaisnavas, who introduce the concept of Mahalakshmi, one who intercedes on behalf of the sinners and persuades Narayana to extend his grace for the good of the devotees."[1]

This is the most relevant feature of the Agamic concept of Pati and His Sakti who is this Mercy personified, Grace itself. Says St. Tiru Jnanasambandhar on this concept: "The manner in which the Primordial Being showers His Grace on the persons to be redeemed and the greatness of that Being, if you begin to enquire about them, are infinite and imponderable; hence stop your enquiry."[2]

30. NEGLECT OF AGAMIC STUDY

The volume of agamic literature in the Sanskrit language is very vast, much greater than even the vedic literature. But yet

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1. S. N. Das Gupta-History of Indian Philosophy, Volume V page 4.
2. St. Jnanasambandhar Devaram - Tiruppasuram verse 3.54.4.

it had not been studied or even referred to by any orientalist. There are several reasons for this neglect. One is that all this literature in manuscript form is available only in the Tamil country; no where in the north of India are the Saivagamas so much as known. It is not surprising that the eminent writer Das Gupta bemoans the fact in the words that "It is curious to note that Banaras, the principal seat of Saivism, has but few manuscripts of importance. The important Siddhantas and Agamas are quite numerous and most of them are in manuscripts mainly in South India."[1] Western scholars who studied Sanskrit literature and philosophy had generally confined themselves to works available there and hence agamic literature existing only in the South, remained an unknown and unexplored field of study.

Another reason for the neglect of the Saivagamas is even more important. The agamas were generally considered, in the Tamil country, as the scriptures for the Saiva Siddhanta School. But a kinds of clannishness had corroded into the Hindu religion after Sankara and Ramanuja had propagated their particular cults. Brahmin as a class swore only by Sankara if they were *smartas*, and by Ramanuja if they were *Vaishnavas*, and the two therefore had nothing to do with the Saiva school, and hence with the Saiva agamas, although these were also in Sanskrit. As pointed out repeatedly, the agamas had co-existed with the Vedas at the time the *srutis* were committed to writing and later philosophers were unable to identify themselves with the followers of earlier forms. The agama school was an earlier philosophy than Sankara and Ramanuja. Hence the estrangement between the followers of the Saiva cult existing from pre-historic times and the followers of the later schools which were established a very long time after the birth of the Christian era.

Yet another reason, and an equally valid and important one, is that all agamic manuscripts were written in the grantha script. Most of the agamas yet remain only in the palm leaf manuscript stage, with the Sivacharyas. All of them without a single exception had been written in the *grantha* script, which was the special script evolved by the Tamil people to write the Sanskrit language. North India had adopted the *devanagiri* script for the Sanskrit language. The Sivacharyas who were virtually the custodians of

1. History of Indian Philosophy Volume V, 1955 page 16.

the agamas never recognised this *nagari* script till the second quarter of the twentieth century. Even the few agamas that were printed were in the *grantha* script (except for two agamas) and so orientalists, who as a rule knew only the *devanagari*, had no opportunity to study the agamas at all.

The eminent Saiva scholar, J. M. Nallaswami Pillai, published in the years 1900-2 some accounts of the *Mrgenda* and the *Sukshma* agamas in his English journal, the *Siddhanta Deepikai*, but they did not attract much notice. P. T. Srinivasa Aiyangar, had devoted a section to the Saivagamas in his Outlines of Indian Philosophy[1], but here he had sought to give an account of the Saiva Siddhanta system of philosophy and to prove the antiquity of the Siva worship but had not undertaken a detailed examination of any agama. In his monumental work on Indian Philosophy in two volumes covering about 1500 pages, Dr. Radhakrishnan had dismissed the Saivagamas with just a mention in three sentences.[2] On the other hand, Dr. Surendranath Das Gupta has devoted a whole volume to the study of Saivism in his History of Indian Philosophy[3] in which he has devoted several sections to the study of the *Mrgendra*, *Matanga Parameswara*, *Vatula* and *Paushkara* agamas, besides many such non-agamaic Sanskrit texts. He has given here a detailed account of the philosophical concepts contained in each of these agamas.

The agamas had been kept alive by the Sivacharyas in manuscripts and also by oral instruction in the various schools (gurukuls) centering round an erudite scholar as a kind of protected preserve, any intrusion into which was even resented. Sivacharyas are those called priests and *adi-Saivas* who had been given the privilege of performing the congregational worship in the temples from time

1. *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, Adyar, 1909.

2. Indian Philoospphy Volume II, 1934, pages 722-3. The opening sentence of his section on Saivism is: "From the beginning the cult of Vaishnavism had for its chief rival, Saivism, which is even today a very popular creed in South India." It is very unfortunate that the eminent scholar here writes as though Saivism is something, new, which erupted much later than Vaishnavism. The emphasis in this sentence is all wrong. Saivism was the basic religion of the Tamil country, from which Vaishnavism branched off or sprouted as a separate cult later. And Saivism had been and continues to be the most wide spread religion in the whole of Tamilnad.

3. *History of Indian Philosophy*, Volume V, 1955.

immemorial. They are *not Brahmins* but are called in the agamas the *Siva-Brahmins*. A generation back, there were scores of really very learned and devoted Sivacharyas, who know the more important agamas by heart. Even in modern days there are many who can quote freely from many unpublished agamas like the *Lalita, Vira, Makuta* (recently printed) *Sukshma, Bimba* etc. Those that quote these agamas are not really in possession of the agama manuscripts. But a thorough knowledge of the texts has passed on from father to son and master to disciple through instruction. As they are given the duty of *parartha-Siva* puja, they are very thorough with the *kriya* or the ritualistic part. But in modern days, the range of scholarship in the agamas is dwindling even among them. Many of them have only small treatises or manuals, which contain selected portions from one or more agamas, dealing with their day to day duties in the temple, such as performance of the worship and special puja and festivals in the temples. These selections are just *vidhis* (or *paddhatis*), rules culled from the *kriya pada* and nothing more. The Sivacharyas thus do not have a comprehensiove knowledge of even the *kriya pada* itself, much less of the equally important *jnana pada.*

The Sivacharyas have been through the ages ministers to the spiritual needs of the society. But now atheism and a negation of the spirit has come to be the fashion of the day. In the name of reason and radicalism, culture, apprenticeship or heritage is no longer considered important for spiritual ministering. Sivacharyas as a result are not held in the respect that is due to them. And they in turn fail to rise up to the high standards of discipline and spiritual leadership expected of them. Many young men among them seek other avocations in life and go out of the fold. The clan is fast dwindling in numbers. Besides, when the older generation passes out, there are hardly any who can step into its place and fulfil the duties of its exalted position.

31. SAIVISM - PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Saivism as a distinctive cult had been in existence not only in South India but also in North India in the early centuries of the Christian era. P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar mentions the following inscriptions which bear historical evidence of this fact. An undated cave inscription of Chandragupta II at Udayagiri recording

the exscavation of a temple of Sambhu (Siva); a stone inscription of Kumaragupta (415-6 A.D.) at Udayagiri recording the building of a number of minor temples in the temple of Mahesvara; the Bihar pillar of Skandagupta and the Mandasor Pillar of Yasodharma; a Kousambi inscription (dated 428-9 A.D.) on a stone image during the days of Bhimavarma.

These inscriptions will suffice to indicate the wide spread and advanced nature of the Saiva cult at the beginning of the 5th century throughout India. Quite a long period of development would naturally have preceded this wide prevalence. The Mohenja-daro and the Harappan excavations seem to indicate that Siva worship was part of a Tamilian (Dravidian) civilization which flourished in the area even five millennia ago. The mention of Uma in the Kenopanishad and the philosophical ideas contained in the *Svetasvatara Upanishad* tell us that the concept of Siva as the Supreme Being is not so new after all, but quite a very ancient one; Uma is just a name for the Grace of Siva. The occurrence of the phrase *namas Sivaya* in the *Krishna Yajur veda-Taittiriya somhita* is also significant.

What is called now the Tamil literature of the Sangham age bears ample evidence to the fact that two thousand years ago Siva was known in the Tamilnad as the Supreme Being. Though His name Siva, is not mentioned there, His manifest form as is known today has been referred to in different places. He is the One under the ficus (kallal) tree; the constellation *ardhra* is specially sacred to Him; He has the bull on His banner; He is the Supreme Lord (*Isa*); He is the holy one with the matted locks; He holds the battle axe (mazhu) in His hand. His mount is the bull; He is the blue throated Lord; *cassia* (konrai) is His favourite flower; He had received the Ganga and contained her fury in His locks; He wears the crescent moon on the locks; He has eight arms; He is the three eyed; He reduced to ashes the three flying fortresses; He has Uma on His left. These attributes do not attach themselves to Rudra, the Destroyer, one of the Hindu Trinity but to Siva the Absolute of Metaphysics and the Brahman of Vedanta.

From all these we can rightly say that Siva, who has all these attributes, was very well known and worshipped in the Tamilnad at least several hundred years before the age of the Sangham literature.

Now we must understand that the Saiva and his religon, the

Saiva Siddhanta prevalent in the Tamilnad, have a message to the world. This is important in the sense that India, particularly Tamilnad in South India, has an unbroken tradition in culture, civilization and religion which has been continuing for several thousand years. Many nations in the world had ancient cultures but they had only a chequered history. The Greek, the Roman, the Babylonian and other similar civilizations had flourished in their countries of origin for several millennia but had all severed their connection with the past and what we now see in these different countries is merely a replica of a later Christian civilization or later Muslim civilization which is wholly unconnected with their own ancient culture and civilization. The other country which had an ancient civilization is China but it has broken with its past and its hoary heritage has been completely destroyed by what took place there a few years ago in the name of the 'cultural revolution' headed by Mao Tse Tung. A new religion and a new culture, which have as their sole aim the destruction of the past religion and culture, have sprung up there and have completely wiped out their rich heritage of the past several millennia. India is probably the only country which has retained the pristine character of its ancient culture and civilization unbroken to this day. Even here, the north of India has fared badly under successive onslaughts of invasions and cultures, but it is agreed on all hands that the South has preserved its culture almost in tact; onslaughts have been fewer, less devastating, less disintegrating and less powerful here. We would say that the agamas through their prescription of spiritual goals for man, have served as the sentinels of the ancient culture. Hence the need for a deep study and proper understanding of the agamas even in the changed conditions of the modern times.

It is a sad reflection on the lamentable neglect of the Saiva community that a very large amount of agamic literature has perished and continues to perish day by day in the palm leaves without seeing the light of print. The Saiva religious institutions such as the affluent temples and the mutts, with all their wealth and pomp, have been regrettably indifferent in this regard. But for the philanthropic interest of the three publishing institutions mentioned earlier, even the few existing agamas would have passed into oblivion long long ago.

Temple rituals embody the highest philosophic concepts in

Saivism. The agamas are the basic texts for both the rituals and the concepts. It is high time that pressure is brought to bear upon the Mutts and Temple managements, and their administrative Government department, to utilise their funds to ensure that all the available agamas are brought out in the nagari script in carefully annotated and translated editions, by competent scholars, with suitable photographic illustrations, so that they may be useful not only to the Saiva Tamilians here, but also to the wider world of English knowing research workers and students of religion and philosophy abroad and a better understanding of the Tamilian spiritual thought may be brought about, the world over. A large part of this work is now being done by the French Institute of Indology at Pondichery under the auspices of the Paris University. But what does India do about it? Do not the Indians have a duty to themselves in the matter of preserving their past legacy?

Funds of the religious institutions are now being ordered to be spent on secular or non-religious activities. This is not proper; this is a betrayal of the trust placed by the Hindu public on the Government. What are called surplus funds today may be spent on secular activities only after ensuring that all religious purposes are satisfactorily met. When the agamas, the source books of all religious rituals are languishing in palm leaves, the Saivas cannot afford to allow their religious funds to be utilised for other purposes. All endowments in the past had been made by the Saiva community to the temples for their proper maintenance and for the propagation of their religion. Two aspects of this duty require immediate attention. One is the publication of the basic source books of the Saiva religion such as the agamas mentioned here. This has been noted on in detail already. The second is the training of the Siva-charyas. There are no doubt a few training institutions for them. But they are not of a high standard. They have been trained only in Sanskrit lore. This is not sufficient in meeting the requirements in knowledge and service in a temple priest. An all round knowledge of many subjects which make up what is called a liberal education in the modern age, a deep understanding of the philosophy of rituals and worship, and at least an elementary knowledge of English is required of them, to keep them abreast of modern life and its goals and to help them in tackling problems of the modern temple going society. Although knowledge and dedicated service may be lacking here too as in all walks of life in this socially

conscious age, which places rights and demands first, ignoring altogether duties and responsibilities, they are an imperative necessity to the temple priest, Sivacharya, who should be able to face up to the challenges of a modern head in spiritual matters. The Sivacharyas should be trained to be not only agamic scholars but profound scholars in the Tamil religious books and philosophy, the Saiva Tirumurai and Siddhanta Sastras, and helped to occupy the exalted place that is really an acharya's. The Sivacharya, imitating the *smartha* brahmin imagines that he has no duty to Tamil. This is bad and even suicidal. He must be trained in the Tamil Devaram and other Tirumurai songs and made to recite them in the divine Presence during worship, as the Nayanmar did in the past, attracting and satisfying the congregation.

Another aspect which requires immediate attention is the salary of the *gurukkal* (sivacharya). Perhaps the *gurukkal*, the religious ministrant is today the lowest paid member in the society. The *gurukkal* was looked after very well in the past when the temples were in a sound financial position and when people were most religious. But today conditions have changed and the land is in the grip of a wave of anti-religion. Here if the *gurukkal* is to survive at all, and perform his function of ministering to the needs of the temple-going community satisfactorily and get equipped for it, he must be given a decent salary which alone can keep him in the job, when dedication to the service is no longer possible. The administration of temples should be not in the hands of a Government which denies God but must be in the hands of a responsible and competent God-fearing separate non-Governmental body which alone can look to the needs of the smallest temple and meet them from the resources of the richer temples. This is on area of public affairs where politics intervenes with its reliance an voting and it would be unwise on our part to comment on this further.

We would like to emphasize here one point and that is that Siva of the Tamils or even of Hinduism is not the Rudra of the Vedas. Siva is the giver of good, mangala, while Rudra is considered to be quite the opposite. "The word Siva supposed to have been derived irregularly from the root 'vas kantam'. This would mean that Siva always fulfils the desires of His devotees." This aspect of Siva as The merciful Lord who is always prepared to grant any boons for which prayers are offered to Him is very well depicted in the Mahabharata and many other Puranas. This aspect of Siva is to be distinguished

from the aspect of Siva as Rudra or Sarva or the god of destruction.[1] Siva is the Supreme, the Brahman, the Paramatman, at whose bidding in the view of Saivism, the three murtis Brahma, Viṣnu and Rudra perform their triple functions of creations, maintenance and destruction. Siva is not one of the Trimurti but the Super Power which directs and controls the Trimurti.

All the Tamil areas of Sri Lanka - the whole of Jaffna, eastern areas and many areas besides are inhabited by the Saiva people who have been worshippers of only Siva unless converted to Christiantity or Islam in the modern day. There is no Vaishnavism there. The fact that Saints Tiru Jnanasambandhar (636-651) and Sundaramurti (c. 700 A.D.) were under a sort of religious compulsion to sing of Tiru Kedisvaram and Tiruk-Konamalai, famous shrines in the Jaffna area, although they could not visit them, would also indicate the antiquity of Siva worship in Sri Lanhs. In fact, before Sangamitra, daughter of Emperor Asoka took Buddhism to Sri Lanks, the whole island followed Saivism. This would also indicate that Saivism had reigned supreme in the mother country even a very long time earlier than the 3rd century B.C.

. Besides the Tamil areas of Sri Lanka, Nepal is probably is the only Sovereign state which professes the Saiva Religion (Hinduism). All this religion here is Sanskrit based and it is significant to note that many agamas had been found there by the scholars. The standard of scholarship in the Sanskrit language in Nepal is of a very high order which could be the envy of Tamilnad, whose Sanskrit scholarship tops all India. Kashmir Saivism we have already noted is not pure Saivism but Saivism coloured by the Advaita Vedanta.

What has been said above in regard to the Sivacharyas applies equally to the Bhattacharyas, the priest of the Vishnu temples.

1. Surendranath Das Gupta-A History of Indian Philosophy Vol. V. pp. 4-5.

SECTION 2

The Agama Books

This section gives a full account of the agama books. A detailed account of all the available agamas (in print)-principal agamas upagamas and selections-are given with the different padas, their subject matter, publisher, script etc. An account of two important digests is also added. Then follows a detailed table of the 28 agamas as given in the *Kamikagama* - their categories, origin, total number of slokas and a list of *upagamas* under each, the organ of Siva which the agama represents, the rshi to whom it was revealed and those through whom it was propagated on earth.

1. THE PRINCIPAL AGAMAS

The principal agamas are called the *Mula agamas.* They are those which had been directly revealed by Siva. These are 28 in number and are generally supposed to expound the four paths of Saiva philosophy and religion - *jnana, yoga, kriya* including rituals and *charya.* Of these, only eight agamas have been published so far, in part, or in full, in the *grantha* or the *nagari* script. *Suprabheda* and *Kirana* have been published in full (i. e. all the four padas) in the *grantha* script. Only the *kriya pada* has been published in respect of the following: *Kamika, Karana,* and *Makuta* in the *grantha* script and *Ajita* and *Raurava* in the *nagari* script (with a few chapters from the *vidya pada*); and the *Vidyapada* (*Jnana pada*) of the *Matanga.* It is quite possible that eminent Sivacharyas had written elaborate glosses on the agamas. But when the agama texts themselves are no longer available, it is no wonder that the commentaries are also not available except in a few rare cases. However, the commentary of *Ramakantha* on the *Vidya pada* of *Matanga Paramasvara* one of the *mulagamas,* and commentaries on *Mrgendra, Vatula, Pauskkara* and *Sardha trisati Kalottara* among

the upagamas are available in print. Ramakantha seems to have been a great agama exponent.

The salient features of the printed agamas are discussed below.

2. KAMIKA AGAMA

The *Kamikagama,* the first in the order of the 28 agamas, represents the Feet of Siva printed in two parts, by the Sivajnanabodham press, in 1901. The total number of verses in it are 12,000, made up as follows: Purva-5166, Uttara-6477; verses lost 357. The term *Kamika* means 'the object desired'; the *Kamikagama* is said to signify the Book which grants the desired object to the souls and helps them to final release through severance of bonds.' The editor says in his introduction that this agama has all the four parts, but as this part-kriya-deals elaborately with the relevant topics from the other three also, those parts do not appear to have much currency among the Sivacharyas. The Kamika is the agama which is widely in use today among them. Sivacharyas say that its authority derives from the fact that it always prescribes the rules very definitely saying "this and not that". Other agamas like the equally important Karana, though larger in size, are said to be not so very mandatory.

The *Purva kamika* the first part was published with a Tamil translation done by Visvesvara Sastri of Tiruvotriyur. It has four sections dealing with the revelation of the agamas, rules for daily observance and worship, rules for the construction of temples and houses and for performance of rituals, and rules for the installation of the deities.

The published volume is very large in size, of 1308 pages in the text, in double royal size. The book is printed with double sized pages, in double columns. On the opening page, there is an invocatory verse in praise of Sadasiva guru of Kanci, obviously a later addition.

The Uttara kamika, the second part, has (98 chapters in) 9 sections dealing with worship, festivals, initiation, temple renovation and the like subjects. Monthly celebrations are very elaborately described. In an introductory note, the editor states that he was induced to take up the publication of the *Sivajnanabodha* and the Agamas by the vision of Devi he had in the Tiruvotriyur

temple in two successive years, and so took up the work for the benefit of mankind. The editor, publishing this part, *Uttara kamika* without a gloss, says that, to those who had gone through the first part with the Tamil gloss, the second part will be easy of understanding, even without any explanation.

3. KARANA AGAMA

The *Karanagama,* representing the ankle of Siva, is even a larger treatise, the fourth in the first group of five. It consists of two parts, the *Purva Karana* and the *Uttara Karana.* Both were published in the Sivajnanabodham press in 1900 in the *grantha* script. This agama derives its name from the fact that it lays down in detail the basis for all the rituals prescribed in the agamas (*karana*-cause, basis). The available (printed) part deals with the *kriya pada;* perhaps this was the important part in this agama.

The *Purva Karana* deals with *karshana, prathishtha. utsava* and *prayaschitta. Korshana* is *krishi,* ploughing, preparation of the site for the construction of the temple. Just as ploughing is the preliminary act for cultivating any crop, so this is the first step for performing any ritual. This part consists of 53 chapters and deals very extensively with all the preliminaries for *puja.* The description of 32 *mudras* used in the various processes of Sivapuja is a remarkable feature of this agama. The next part pratishtha, in the 84 chapters in it, deals with all aspects of puja, *atmartha puja, homa,* installation of the various types of *lingas,* installation of the various icons in their respective places in a large temple, weekly worship, monthly worship etc., annual festivals, puja for special occasions, renovation of dilapidated temples and their consecration etc. The third part in its eight chapters deals exclusively with festivals-daily and annual, car festivals etc. Lastly, the *prayaschitta* part in its ten chapters deals with all types of expiatory rituals and also *Siva diksha.*

Today it staggers our imagination that our forefathers could have thought up so many thousand details in their imagination and put on record those rules and regulations for temples and worship. These records were put into practice later, in the Chola period in particular (9th to the 13th centuries) and we find today that the agamas in their entirety are closely adhered to in all the temples. If at all anything could be said to be living, we may say

that the code of temple worship laid down in the agamas, more than at least 1000 years ago, is fully alive and pulsating with life and vitally even in the 20th century.

The *Uttara Karana* has 105 chapters. The initial chapter on *tantravatara* again covers the same ground, viz, origin of the agamas etc. Other chapters are *mantravatara, karshana,* and similar details in full on *agnikaraya, sivalinga sthapana,* renovation, festivals, monthly festivals and special festivals in the course of the 12 months beginning from Karttikai, including the Ardra and Sivaratri celebrations. Then there are separate chapters for the worship of each of the 25 Siva murtis like Somaskanda, Sarabhesvara and so on. *Divya vriksha puja* (divine temple tree) is mentioned in a chapter of 25 verses.

Further chapters deal with Mahamari pratishtha,[1] the temple car (*ratha*), Bhadrakali, Matham (Mutt), Vidya pitham, Rishi sthapana, Sivabhakta pratishtha, dvaja sthapana, the temple flower garden, Mahabhisheka and Soura' sthapana. That these chapters are later additions is quite obvious, from the fact that they provide for the installation of the images of Sivabhaktas, whose stories became collectively current among the people only after Sekkilar, 12th century.

The editor has added at the end two chapters (108 verses) on Badrakali festival and installation of Naga (serpent) and has noted that these had been found as additions in the manuscripts of this agama, taken from some other agamas, and so he was printing them as an appendix not willing to lose them.

Karanagama is the text followed in a sizeable number of the temples of Tamilnadu. A 16th century poem (*Tiru-Kalatti nathar Ula*) states that the puja in the shrine of Kalahasti was performed according to the *Karanagama*. The *Karana* is the text followed for the puja of Aghora murti in the famous Tiruvenkadu temple (Sikali taluk, Tanjavur district).

The Karanagama gives greater material on architecture and sculpture and so is held to be more valuable by the *stapatis*.

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1. Mahamari is a minor goddess who is a village tutelary deity installed on the outskirts of every village in Tamilnad. Town planning in the past had allotted definite place to Mari and Sasta on the outskirts. Mari is a deity with a baneful influence while Sasta has a beneficial influence. However, both have no place in the Siva temple complex. This *Mari prathishtha* chapter is a later interpolation inserted by the Sivacharyas yielding to the worship of minor deities in the Saiva Community which had resulted through smartha influence.

4. AJITA AGAMA

The *Ajitagama* the fifth is said to represent the knees of Siva. Its *kriya pada* alone has been published in two parts by the French Institute. It was revealed to Achyuta (Vishnu) by Paramesvara. The two parts contain 54 chapters. As usual it deals with all aspects of *kriya,* beginning with *tantravatara* and ending with *Surya puja.* Some aspects on *charya* and the *mudras* are a special feature of this agama. Special chapters on bathing Siva with milk, ghee etc. are found here. The 25 Siva murtis and other deities are described elaborately. The sub-temples and the rules for installation of the various deities and their consecration rituals are fully described here. Charts and tables have been added. Special mention may be made of the *snapana* charts for 1008, 48, 24 *snapana vidhi* and so on. A third part is to be issued soon.

5. SAHASRA AGAMA

The Sahasragama, the eighth in the series of ten *Sivabheda-agamas* is one of the five revealed from the Vamadeva conntenance to Kala, Bhima and Dharma. It is said to have ten Upagamas. It represents the waist of Sadasiva. Although available in manuscript, the agama has not yet been published in full. Chapter 24 entitled the *Ashtabandhana vidhi* taken from its *Kriya pada,* has been published[1] with a Tamil translation. This portion contains 570 verses.

6. SUPRABHEDA AGAMA

The *Suprabheda agama,* tenth in the series, represents the navel in the body of Siva. It was revealed to Vinayaka (Ganapati). The name is said to signify that the agama aims at securing the Grace of Siva. This is one of the two agamas in which all the four parts are available and printed together. No gloss was perhaps written on this. The text alone was printed in 1929 in the *grantha* script by Alagappa Mudaliyar successor to Shanmukha sundara Mudaliyar in the Sivajnanabodham press. This is said to consist of 30 million *granthas* but only 4666 verses seem to have been available for the editor, who had made a note that he had printed only

1. In the pages of the monthly journal *Jnanasambandham* of Dharma puram, by Swaminatha Sivacharya.

the available portion of the agama and was willing to print further chapters if any one could supply them. This agama is in the order of *kriya, charya, yoga* and *jnana:* the chapters are 56, 12, 3 and 3 respectively. The relative emphasis which this agama lays can be judged from the length of the treatment of each part.

The need for so many agamas covering the same topics will be apparent if we compare two large agamas. For example, a comparison of the *kriya padas* of *Karana* and *Suprabheda* indicates clearly that the one is a complement to the other and that both cover different grounds. Although the *Suprabheda* mentions the same topics, the details are entirely different. Mudras are mentioned here briefly but *archana* and the various equipments for festivals and the materials to be gathered therefor are dealt with at great length. The chapter on *praasaada lakshana vidhi* is similarly a very elaborate one.

The charya pada deals with the Saiva *bhedas, diksha, kriya, vratas* for different *ashramas* and the like.

The *yoga pada* is very brief in the agamas, where it is available. Here also it contains only three chapters, *Nadi chakra, Kala chakra* and *Adara adeya;* only the *ashtanga yoga* is mentioned.

The *Jnana pada* also is here quite brief. It deals with Siva, *pasu* and *adhva;* under *adhva,* the six *adhvas,* the various worlds above and below the earth, and the 38 *kalas* are explained.

7. RAURAVA AGAMA

The *Rauravagama* the sixteenth, representing the ears of Siva, is one of the principal agamas, said to be taught to sage Ruru (hence the name Raurava) by Siva Himself. The first volume thereof has been published by the French Institute of Indology, in 1961, with variant readings, copious notes, parallel passages from the other agamas, very useful indices and tables. This contains 2 parts, the *Vidyapada* and the *Kriyapada.* The first part was first printed with 142 verses in four chapters and later, six more chapters, with 202 verses, found in *Raurava sutra sangraha,* have been added at the end. The second part, *Kriyapada,* contains 847 verses in 16 chapters. The editor has done a large amount of research work in editing the agama as can be seen from the contents of the various tables in the *Rauravagama.* To give an example: *Agnikarya* is an important part of the *Kriya pada.* The editor has given here a very large table,

compiled from 17 agamic and other texts, of the names of the various *agnis*, their heads, horn, eye, nose, tongue, heads, feet, vehicle and weapons. From the *Karanagama* alone 13 types of agnis are tabulated.

The second volume of the *Rauravagama*, published in 1972 by the French Institute, follows the same pattern as the first. Variant readings, notes, parallel passages from the Sivagamas, indices and tables have been added. Illustrative plates for *mandapam, vimanas* and several *murtis* have also been attached. The text consists of chapters 27 to 46, with an appendix entiled *Pancasadakhya vidhi patala;* according to the editor, this is an interpolation in the text, containing the verses from the upagama *Vatula suddhakhya;* this *patala* alone contains 108 verses. This volume of 20 chapters contains 1249 verses and deals with *pithas, dvarapalas,* seventeen *murti* forms (from *parivarashtaka* to *Daksina-murti*), *vimanas, stambhas, mandapas, prakaras* and *gopuras.* The Institute has prepared a further volume of the Raurava for print.

There is a school of thought among the Tamil Saiva scholars which always seeks to trace the origin of any valuable concept in literature, art, religion or philosophy to a Sanskrit source. Some adherents of that school have been contending that the Tamil *Sivajnanabodham* of Meykandar (12 *sutras*) was a translation of 12 verses in a chapter by name *Pasa-mochana* patala in the *Raura-vagama. Pasa-mochana,* liberation from bonds, is a subject which could be dealt with only in the *Vidya* pada of any agama. The published Vidyapada of Rauravagama contains ten chapters on the heads: *Srishti krama, Siva tattva, Tantravatara, Adhva vidhi, Mudralakshnam. Pancha-brahma-kala vidhi, Dharana vidhi, Diksha, Atma-sankranti* and *Mantrarta varnanam.* It is apparent that the pasa-mochana chapter is not one of these. But it may be argued that many more manuscripts of the agama may have to be collected and studied to give a decisive opinion in the matter. . Still, considering the nature of the treatment of subjects in the existing *vidya pada,* we may aver that *pasa-mochana* could not have been a subject dealt with herein[1]. Though the *Vidya pada* constitutes only one of the

1. Compare on the other hand the twelve chapters of the Vidya pada of the Kirana agama; pasu patala, Maya, Karma, Pati, Saktipada, Diksha karma, Mantra, Bhuvana, Sivattattva, Tantravatura, Matrukotpatti and Yantroddhara. Similarly in Matanga: Tattvadvaya lakshna, Pati, Sakti, Isvara, sadhana, then the vidya tattvas – Maya, Kalai, Vidya, Raga, Kaala, Niyati, Purusha; and then the pradhana tattvas – Guna, Vidya, Ahankara, Dharma-adharma nirnaya patalam.

four parts in all agamas, each agama chooses a few subjects under the subject of *jnana* and treats it here in its own way. We find in the *Rauravagama*, the subject of *Pati, pasu* or *pasu* not dealt with. Hence the consideration of *pasa-mochana* (liberation from *pasa*) in this pada does not naturally arise.

Again, three of the twelve verses in the so-called *pasa-mochana patala* are found in a manuscript entitled *Svayambhuva sangraha* but are not found in the *Svayambhuva agama*. This goes to indicate that the twelve verses might perhaps have been selected from different sources and strung together to give a continuous treatment. Besides, the language employed in those verses is the language of the *nyaya sastra* in diction and syntax and not the agamic language. Hence also we have to conclude that they never formed part of an agama[1]. We need not go further here into the question of translation of the Tamil text. What is more likely is that some Sanskrit lover translated the Sutras of Meykandar into Sanskrit and called them the Sanskrit Sivajnana bodham, under the fond notion of the Sanskritists of the day that any worthwhile sastra could be only in Sanskrit. This translation had given rise to such a legend from about the early 14th century. There is also a Raurava Sutra Sangraha in manuscript.

8. MAKUTAGAMA

The *Makutagama,* 17th in the series was taught by Paramesvara to Rudra named Siva. This represents the *mastaka* or head or crown of Sadasiva. The agama is said to be in two parts. Makutam and Makutotharam. It has the usual *purva* and *uttara bhagas* under *Kriya pada.* Neither the whole of the agama nor even the whole of this *pada* is available in full. Swaminatha sivacharyar of Tiru Avaduturai was able to collect only 12 chapters from *Tantravatara patala* to *Acharya lakshana vidhi* and this part was published in the *grantha* script in 1977 by C. Swaminatha Sivacharyar, secretary of the South Indian Archakar Association. The published portion has about 1980 slokas.

The chapters deal as usual with the origin and revelation of the Agamas in general and the *Makutagama* in particular, details

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1. We are indebted to Sri N. R. Bhatt of the French Institute of Indology, Pondichery for some of the views expressed in this paragraph.

of personal discipline for the acharya, the various preliminaries like *suddhi* and *nyasa, diksha vidhi,* rules for festivals, *prayaschitta* vidhi, miscellanous rules, *dipa* for *Karttikai, snapana vidhi* and similiar rules.

Puja of Nataraja is generally said to follow the *Makutagama* rules. The puja at Chidambaram and at similar other places where prominence is given to Nataraja is according to this agama. The Makutagama puja at Chidambaram is mentioned by Kalamegham a Tamil poet of the 14-15th centuries. This agama was the text for the great Temple at Tanjavur built by the Chola Emperor Rajaraja I.

9. MATANGA PARAMESVARA

The *Matanga Paramesvara Agama,* the twenty sixth, representing the garland of Siva, has been published by the Sivagama Siddhanta paripalana Sangham of Devakottai in the nagari script in 1924. This agama derives its name from Sage Matanga to whom it was revealed by Srikantha. Originally this was written by Sadasiva in ten million verses. Ananta reduced it to a hundred thousand verses; this was further summarised into four parts containing 3500 verses. Bhatta Ramakantha has written a gloss on the agama but it was not published by the Sangham. Only the *Vidyapada* text, with about 1530 verses in 26 chapters had been printed. This deals at length with the *tattvas,* and only briefly with the principles beyond the tattvas. It is generally in the nature of questions by Matanga rshi and detailed answers by Paramesvara. The Angkorvat temple in Cambodia is said to have been built on the authority of the Matanga Paramesvara agama.

This Agama *Vidyapada,* edited by Prof. N.R. Bhatt has been now published with the commentary of Bhatta Ramakantha in 1977 in a handsome volume by the French Institute in the *nagari* script, in a beautiful edition. The volume is a classic of editing and get up. The substance of the text is given in French and in Sanskrit in the Introduction. Elaborate footnotes, parallel passages, appendices and indexes add to the value of the volume. A second volume of the agama containing the other padas has been prepared as usual and sent to the press.

10. KIRANA AGAMA

The *Kiranagama,* representing the ornaments worn by Siva, one of the last group of eight revealed by Isana, is one of the three

agamas in which all the four padas are available in print. It is the 28th, the last in the series. It was printed in 1952 in the *grantha* script by the Devakottai Sangham. The book contains only the bare text with a list of contents. It places the Yogapada in the last part.

The *Kirana* was disclosed to Garuda by Paramesvara. The *Sivagama sekharam* mentions its verses at fifty million, but the printed text contains only 1991 verses.

The book has been printed under the title *Kiranagama mahatantra,* presumably because the second verse of Siva's reply to Garuda's question says that this is the *Kiranakhya mahatantra.*

The first part, *Vidya pada,* contains 12 chapters, dealing with *pasu, maya, karma, pati, saktipata, diksha, mantra, bhuvana, Sivatatva, tantravatara, matrukotpatti* and *yantroddhara.* (*Matrukotpatti* is in other words *mantravatara.*) The entire treatment is necessarily brief.

The second is the *Kriya pada,* with 18 chapters. Though this is the largest part in the other agamas, it is not so here. Comparatively this is brief. This begins with *snanavidhi* (rules for bathing) and goes on principally with the rules for all rituals, performed by the householder in his house. In this, this agama makes a departure from the others. It is remarkable that this has also a chapter on the house plan for the home, laying down that the bedroom must be in the south, the armourv or the tools room in the southwest, the drawing room in the west, the puja room in the northeast, the office room in the north and so on. It is not possible to go into the other details here for want of space. Good householders in Tamilnadu will no doubt realise how correct and healthy this distribution is, even today. From this we may perceive that nothing has escaped the attention of the agama law makers.

The third part is the *charya padu,* the longest in this agama. This consists of 26 chapters, dealing with all aspects of personal discipline for the worshipper. *Sarasvati puja, Mrityunjaya puja,* disciplines for the preceptor, the Saiva and the novice, and *praasaada lakshana* are some of the salient features of this part. A few verses also mention the rules for the renovation of temples.

The *yoga pada* consists of seven chapters. Only the first has anything to do with *yoga* as we understand it today. This deals with the practice of yoga. *Yoga* may be practised in the home or in the temple. Eight *asanas* are here described. Then the three parts

of *pranayama* are given. Then the other chapters deal with subjects like *sraddha* and *matruka nyasa*. The agama ends with a reference to the *Dipta* and *Suprabheda* agamas.

THE VIRAGAMA[1]

Shanmukhasundara Mudaliyar, the 19th century publisher of the Saiva agamas, had stated in a price list that the Vira agama was in print. Perhaps he had then done the editing and other preliminary work for its publication. But the book does not appear to have been published by him or by any one else.

THE SUKSHMAGAMA

According to the Tamil manual, *Saiva samaya neri,* verse 501 (16th century), the *Sukshmagama* is a special text devoted to the rules of the *atmartha linga puja*. The agama has not been published.

11. THE UPAGAMAS

Now we shall pass on to the *upagamas,* or secondary agamas. These are derivatives of the principal agamas. Each principal agama had given rise to several upagamas, from one to sixteen: their total number is 207. The *Kamika,* the *Karanagama* and most other agamas give in detail the names of the 207 upagamas. Some of the upagamas like the *Mrgendra* deal fully with the four padas, while some others, like the *Siva dharmottaram* merely lay down the rules for rituals and penances. It is to be inferred that the upagamas generally were compiled much later than the principal agamas. The upagamas serve as the sandal paste and flowers on the person of Siva. The *Suta samhita,* considered to belong to the 4th century A.D., is said to deal at length with the Saivagamas (principal) but does not mention any upagama. Perhaps as a body of Saiva literature of scriptural value, the *upagamas* came into existence later.

But some of them like the *Mrgendra* and *Paushkara* do deal with philosophical subjects.

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1. A small book of 123 Tamil verses was published in 1937 by Nagi chettiyar under the title *Viragama*. This refers to the lives of Virasaiva saints and preceptors and was perhaps considered a Tamil scriptural text for the Virasaiva cult. Its authorship is unknown. The term agama is used in its title merely as an equivalent to a religious treatise. It has no relationship with the Sanskrit principal agama of the same name. It may be a work of the 18th century.

More than 45 upagamas are available with the French Institute of Indology, Pondichery, awaiting publication. It may be remarked that they have already published the *Mrgendra* in 1962 and *Sardha-trisati Kalottara* in 1981.

12. MRGENDRA AGAMA

The *Mrgendragama* is the first upagama under Kamika; it is also known as *Narasimha.* Indra, lord of the celestials, performed a very hard penance, for expiating the sin of his slaying Vriddhra-asura. Siva was appeased by this and so He appeared before Indra and taught him this agama. Since Indra was wearing a lion's skin when he was learning this agama (after performing his tapas) the agama came to be called Mrgendra (lion). This agama is said to be a digest of the larger Kamika. It has all the four parts and they have been published. The *Vidyapeda* alone was published by the Sivajnanabodham press at the turn of the century in the *grantha* script with a Tamil translation. It contains 13 chapters. It begins with a refutation of the various schools of thought on the doctrine of *mukti* (liberation), then goes on to state its own doctrines under various heads such as *Pati* (God), *Pasu* (the soul) *pasa* (bonds), *maya* and so on.

The Devakottai Sangham published in 1928 the *Vidya pada* and the *Yogapada* of the *Mrgendra,* with both the commentaries of Bhatta Narayana Kantha and Aghora Sivacharya, in the *nagari* script. This is a handsome volume printed in large type. Then again these two were published by Pandit Madhusudan K. Sastri of Bombay in 1930 in the Kashmir Sanskrit Series, with the first commentary in the *nagari* script. The *Yogapada* contains only one chapter. This deals in detail with some of the various steps in the *ashtanga yoga* such as *pranayama, pratyahara, samadhi* and *asana,* and similar practices. The parts of *pranayama-rechaka, puraka* and *kumbhaka*-are dealt with in detail. This part has only the gloss (*vritti*) of Narayana kantha.

The other two parts, the kriya pada and the charya pada have been published by the French Institute, in 1962, in the *nagari* script, with the commentary of Bhatta Narayana kantha. The kriya pada has eight chapters, while the charya has only one.

The Kriyapada deals with *snana, agni karya, diksha* etc. Here 11 *mudras* are described in detail. The book contains full photographic illustrations of these *mudras,* as also of the various articles

used for *agni karya* and *shodasopachara*, in art plates. A beautiful plan drawing of the *yagasala*, with explanatory notes for each position and each item, considerably enhance the value of the book.

The charya part of one chapter, contains 130 verses. Perhaps there were more chapters, which however are not available now.

The *Mrgendragama* has often been quoted in the *Sarvadarsanasamgraha*. This work is said to be a subsidiary part of *Kamikagama* supposed to be one of the oldest of the Agamas, and has been referred to in the *Suta-samhita* which refers to the *Kamikagama* with the reverence that is due to very old texts.[1]

13. VATULA SUDDHAKHYA

The *Vatula suddhakhya* has been published by the Sivajnanabodham press in 1912 in the *grantha* script. This is the ninth upagama under the *Vatulagama*, which is the 28th and the last in the order of the 28 agamas. It is said to have been revealed to Subrahmanya by Paramesvara. The text contains 10 chapters with 782 verses. In the early days, knowledge of Sanskrit texts was very meagre and we find the editor Alagappa Mudaliyar had very great difficulty in distinguishing among the text, the commentary and the quotations. The name of the commentator is not known.

The first eight chapters deal with *tattva, varna, chakra, varga* (creation, preservation and dissolution), *mantra, pranava, brahma* and *anga*.

The last two deal with the origin of the *mantras* and their differences. The editor has added the last chapter, *mantra kila patalam* as a sort of appendix and, from the nature of its contents, we infer that it is a very late addition.

There is only part of this *Vatula* and it does not appear to be divided into the usual four *padas*. This agama is mentioned by Kachiyappa Sivacharya (15th century) in his Tamil *Skanda puranam* (3. 21. 120): "Only those who have mastered the agamas like the *Suddha Vatula* can realise Him (Sri Kumara) a little".

The *mulagama, Vatula*, has not seen the light of print; what

1. S. N. Das Gupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Volume V 1955, page 21.

we have so far discussed appears to be only a *upagama* under the principal *Vatula.* But Das Gupta has discussed the *Vatulagama* from the study of a manuscript in the Oriental Reserrch Institute, Mysore. He says therein that this agama contains more verses in its concluding tenth chapter in which the *Vira Saiva* doctrine is praised above the Saiva doctrine. The supplementary portion of *Vatulagama* introduces the doctrine of *linga dharana* of the Vira Saivas, but does not say anything about its specific philosophy or about its other doctrines associated with *Shatsthala.*[1] The tenth chapter is evidently a later addition made perhaps after the 14th century (Madhava's period).

After a brief reference in this manner to the *Vatula,* Das Gupta gives a more detailed account of the *Vatula tantram* (the *Vatula Suddhakhyam*) and says that its author quotes the *Tattvaprakasika* of Bhoja and its commentary by Aghora Sivacharya; perhaps the reference to *Tattva prakshika* might have been added on to the text of the agama after Aghora sivacharya wrote his commentary.

This does not prove anything. The modern Karnataka state is the home of the Vira Saiva (called by some the Vira Mahesvara) cult. Basava hailed from this state in the 12th century (1125-1165) and the Vira Saiva cult as such originated from him. Das Gupta himself remarks that Madhva (14th century), who mentions the Pasupatas and the Agama Saivas, does not seem to know anything about the Vira Saivas. Hence it should be clear that the tenth chapter mentioned here is obviously a later interpolation made after the 14th century. Hence also it should be clear that neither the *Vatulagama* nor the *Viragama* (mentioned earlier) could have any thing to do with the Vira Saiva cult.

The Vatula Suddakhya has also been published under the title the *Agama Rahasya,* by Talaikkadu Agamika Krishna Dikshitar in 1958 in Bangalore, in the *nagari* script.

A verse sung in praise of Sivaprakasa desikar founder of the Tiruttutaiyur Vira Saiva Adhinam states that this Sivaprakasar wrote *Advaita Venba* in 411 verses to expound the philosophy contained in the *Vatulagama.* The *venba* is even called the *Sakala-agamasara Advaita Venba* and the object of the book is even said to be the merging of the body in the Linga worn on it. It has an elaborate Vira Saiva commentary written by Nannul Sivaprakasar, the sixth in this line.

14. PAUSHKARA AGAMA

The *Paushkaragama,* also known as *Pushkaram,* is one of the upagamas of *Paramesvaram.* The *Jnanapada* is apparently the only part of it that is available now.

This was first published by Shanmukha sundara mudaliyar in 1881 with an elaborate Tamil translation as usual. It is a large book of 800 pages. The *rshis* appealed to Paramesvara to teach them the *jnana pada* as they had already learnt from Him the charya and *kriya padas.* The agama is in the nature of an exposition by Paramesvara to the *rshis.* Occasionally they also ask him questions and He replies them. It is divided into 9 chapters containing 977 verses. The first six deal with *Pati, bindhu, maya, pasu, pasa* and *purusha tattva;* the next deals with *pramana* or instruments of knowledge, and the last, with the evolution of the *tantras* and the *mantras,* which is a general feature of all the agamas. The first six chapters deal with the three entities, God, soul and matter and this agama divides the subject under the above six heads.[1]

This agama had the benefit of an elaborate commentary attributed to Saint Umapati, the fourth acharya (14th century A. D.) in the line of Meykandar. This was again published in 1925 in the *grantha* script with Umapati's commentary by Ambalavana Navalar in his own press at Chidambaram. This printed book is a large volume, running to over 850 pages. This edition contains only 937 verses.

The *Vidya pada* has also been published in the Arthur Avalon Tantric Texts Series, Calcutta.

Dr. Das Gupta has devoted nine pages to the analysis of the Siddhanta concepts contained in this agama, the longest in his account of five agamas in his *History of Indian Philosophy* Vol. V.

15. KUMARA TANTRA

The *Kumara tantra* is a large upagama, with 52 chapters, revealed to sage Kausika by Paramesvara. It deals only with the *kriya pada.* As its name suggests, it deals with the worship of Kumara

[1] The editor has prefixed a useful glossary of important Sanskrit terms.

(Subrahmanya). The usual rules for all the rituals connected with temple worship are very elaborately laid down. Worship of Maha-Valli[1] and Devasena, the consorts of Kumara, are also given in detail. A number of chapters deals with monthly worship and monthly celebrations. An introductory verse states that this agama is extracted from the *Karanakhya*. Kachiyappa Sivacharya (mentioned earlier) says this agama was revealed to Umadevi by Paramesvara (4.18.24): "They offered worship to Kumara in the three places, the *kumbha*, the *agni* and the *linga*, as laid down in the *Kumara tantra*, which was revealed to Umadevi by Paramesvara."

This is an upagama under the principal agama *Lalita*. This upagama emphasizes at every stage the *Shanmurti mantras*. *Om Jagat Bhuve namah, Om Vacat Bhuve namah, Om Visva bhuve, Om Rudra Bhuve namah, Om Brahnma Bhuve namah, Om Bhuva Bhuve namah*. *Dhyana, Japa* and *mantra* are given separately; and the *dhyana slokas* are such as to imprint clearly the form of the *murti* in the mind of the meditator. The chapters *Skandotsava vidhi patala* and *masa puja vidhi patala* are the longest with 388 and 380 slokas. The *Sayana vidhi patala* is said to be not available in the manuscripts.

This *tantra* has been republished in 1974 by the South Indian Archakar Association in the *nagari* script.

16. SARDHA - TRISATI - KALOTTARAGAMA

This is an upagama under the *Vatula - agama* and seems to be an abridged version of the *Kalottaragama*, which has various recensions. It has 350 *slokas* and hence the term *sardha trisati*. It is a selection from *Trayodasa sati kalottara* with 1300 *slokas*. This is very handsomely edited by Professor N. R. Bhatt and published in the Agama series of the French Institute of Indology, Pondichery in 1979. Though the name *Kalottara* is not mentioned under *Vatula*, the editor feels that this is the same as *Kalaijnana* which is a synonym of *Kalottara*. The colophon of the upagama sometimes mentions it as *Kalottara*. The term means that it is "beyond time". *Devikalottara*, familiar also in Tamil is one of the recensions of this upagama. *Skanda Kalottara* is another. Most of the others

1. It is a habit with Sanskritists to attach the prefix *Maha* (great) to many deities (cf. Mahakali, Mahamari, Mahasasta etc.) Valli is a consort of Kumara in the Tamil tradition which no one attaches the prefix *maha* to her.

take their names from the number of slokas in them. *Devikalottara* is also called *Catur vimsatikalottara;* it is a dialogue between Devi and Siva. But all the others including the present one are in the form of a dialogue between Karttikeya and Siva.

This upagama is in 27 patalas and has a short but difficult commentary written on it by Bhatta Ramakantha, a great commentator of agamas and some of the *Ashta prakarana* sastras.

In all its 27 patalas the upagama deals with the following subjects: Formation of the mantras; placing of the mantras on the inner organs and the outer organs), snana, *bhasmasnana, archana,* agnikarya, mandala (diagram), diksha, abhisheka of the sadhaka, nadichakra, jivajnana, vidya (pure knowledge), mantra srishti, expiation for swerving from the goal, praasaadabheda, praasaada mantra, vijnana (knowledge), kalachakra; 8 varieties of Siva mantra, vyapti, pratyaya (conviction on faith), praasaada mantra, concluse ion, jnanamrita, pratyaksha, worship of Siva, extrication from th- religious state, antyeshti and astra yaga (fire ritual with astra mantra).

The present edition gives the text as usual in *nagari* with parallel passages from the other Kattottaragamas, variant readings, index to quotations, an exhautive introduction in French; the English summary of the text is a welcome new feature.

17. THE OTHER UPAGAMAS

Excepting for the few words about one or two upagamas mentioned below, nothing is known about the others. The *Pingalamata* is a upagama under the *Prodgitam,* the 21st in the order of agamas. Sivagra Yogi quotes in his *Saiva Sannyasa paddhati,* a gloss on this written by Ramakantha; but neither the text nor the gloss appears to be available now.

The *Sarvajnanottaram*[1] and the *Sivadharmottaram*[2] are said to be two agamas, but the first is not found among

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1. *Sarvajnanottaram,* Sanskrit and Tamil, commentary by P. Muthiah Pillia, 1923. This upagama is said to have been revealed to Kumara by Parameswara.

2. *Sivadharmottaram,* (Tamil) edited by Mayilai Vidwan Shanmukam Pillai, Madras, 1888: verse 15. This upagama is said to have been taught by Kumara to Sage Agastya. It has been published in Tamil several times with a sixteenth century commentary.

the agamas or their upagamas. But it could be a different recension under *Kqlottara* (*Kalajnaam*) under the *Vatulagama.* The *Sarvajnanottaram,* has gone through several editions in Sanskrit; it has 240 verses in 9 *prakaranas* or chapters and deals only with the *Vidya padas*. There is a metrical Tamil translation of this agama made in the 15th century and it contains 71 verses. Kuppuswami raju has translated this agama into Tamil prose, with a vedanta or *advaita* bias. The other one, *Sivadharmottara* dealing with *charya* only, is available in a Tamil translation in 1222 verses; the original Sanskrit does not appear to be available.

Two or three upagamas are also known as *Samhitas.* The *Rudra Yamala* is said to be a upagama; but its name is not found in the list of the 207 upagamas. It is said to lay down rules for *Mahamari pratishtha* and the like. Perhaps it is a *tantra* text, pertaining to the Sakta cult.

We are also led to believe that selections from several upagamas were made to form a new upagama where it was found useful to have a shorter or specific compendium on some selected topics. The *Mayura tantram* is said to be one such, culled from the *Makuta* and the *Vatula.*

18. SELECTIONS FROM THE AGAMAS

Many selections seem to have been culled from the various agamas, and each selection had dealt with some aspect or with some particular *pada.* The earliest available is perhaps the one by Saint Umapati Sivacharya, the last of the four Santana Acharyas[1] of the Saiva Siddhanta School. We shall speak about it further on. There have been many selections from the agamas for ritualistic purposes such as the *Santiratnakaram* and the *Santikusumakaram.* The *Santi ratnakaram* was written and compiled by Kamalakara bhatta, son of Ramakrishna bhatta (who was the son of Narayana bhatta). *Agama Manimalai* is a compilation or manual of some useful topics, collected in the 20th century.

There are innumerable manuals termed *paddhatis* which are condensations of passages and accounts from many agamas taken

1. Saint Meykandar, Saint Arulnandi, Saint Maraijnana sambandhar and Saint Umapati are the four santana acharyas, or spiritual preceptors, coming as master and disciple in a direct line from Kailas.

out and re-arranged for specific purposes. They are said to be 18 in number after the legendary 18 Sivacharyas. A discussion of these has been made by us separately.[1]

Besides these, we learn there have been abridged versions of some agamas in use. The *Raurava* and the *Swayambhuva* seem to have been condensed in this manner; we hear also of the *Raurava sangraha*, the *Rauravottara*, the *Swayambhuva sangraha* etc.

19. SATA RATNA SANGRAHAM

Saint Umapati lived in the first half of the 14th century (c. 1278-1348). He had selected one hundred important verses from the agamas and the upagamas and called them the *Sataratna sangraha* (one hundred gems). His text had been chosen from the *Svayambhuva, Nisvasa, Matanga, Devyamata, Kirana, Parakhya, Visvasara,* agamas and the *Mrgendra, Devikalottara* and *Jnanottara* upagamas. Obviously he had considered both the principal and the derivative agamas as equally authoritative. The selection is said to contain the quintessence of the Siddhanta philosophy, known also as the *Agamanta.* It deals principally with the *Jnana* (realisation) and *diksha* (initiation by a precepter). Umapati is said to have written a gloss on the text in Sanskrit with profuse illustrative quotations from the agamas themselves, and also from later philosophical treatises. He called his gloss the *Satarana ullekhini,* the cutting and the polishing of the gems, which would help them to shed their fullest lustre. (It is possible that Saint Umapati did not write the Ullekhini and only a later disciple wrote it). Though this selection had been mentioned by a few Tamil writers, it had not been available in the Tamilnadu. However, the text and the commentary were printed and published in Calcutta under Umapati's name, by Panchanan Sastri in the *nagari* script, as volume XXII of the Arthur Avalon Tantric Texts Series. Its publication as a Tantric text only indicates that the Calcutta School does not make any distinction between the Agamas and the Tantras.

However, a classical Tamil translation and even publication of Umapati's selection somehow seems to have passed unnoticed by the Siddhanta scholars. Sivaprakasa swami of Turaimangalam, a well known gifted Vira Saiva poet of the 17th century, and author

1. Vide Saiva Siddhanta, Madras, 1967, Volume 2, pages 89-101.

of many polemic treatises and translations, had made a faithful metrical translation of this agamic text alone into a hundred quatrains. It was called the *Satamani malai* and was published in 1944. The translation is in good poetic form and is also an accurate one.

20. THE SAKALAGAMA SARA SANGRAHA

This is a selection from all the agamas, compiled at a later date. Presumbly there were two books, the *Sara* and the *Sara Sangraho*. Only the second one (the shorter selection) has been published. This is itself quite a large selection, running to over a thousand verses. These are taken from 33 principal agamas and upagamas, 10 tantras, 23 sastras like the *Somasambhu paddhati* and *Jnanaratnavali,* and 26 *puranas*. From the sastras mentioned, we may conclude that the selection is later than the originals and so its date has to be fixed as 15-16th centuries. We may also infer perhaps that of the 28 principal agamas, only the 18 mentioned by the selection were known to the compiler. The name of the compiler is not known.

This manual is intended to help the Sivacharyas in their Siva puja and as such it deals only with the *kriya* part. It is in four chapters - *nityakarma vidhi* dealing with daily disciplines and rituals, *Sivarchana vidhi* or rules for Siva puja, *Sivalaya darsana vidhi* or rules for the devotees' participation in the temple worship, and *pakavidhi,* rules for the cooking and offering of food.

The manual has been reissued by the South Indian Archakar Association in 1974 in the nagari script. In this edition, verses are found under the caption *Navagraha puja* at the end of first part ending with *Surya puja* : puja for the sun god. The earlier *slokas* end with the puja relating to Surya with his consorts Usha and Pratyusha, while here are given the forms and the puja for the other eight *grahas* which are the *parivara devatas* for Surya. They are mentioned in the following order: Soma (Moon), Budha, Guru, Sukra, Angaraka, Sani, Rahu and Ketu. The slokas are mentioned here as quotations from the *Kiranagama*. But on verification they are not found in the *Kirana*. The inference naturally is that when the Sivacharyas were prevailed upon by the smarthas to perform navagraha puja also, these and similar verses were newly invented and added on to the hand books or manuals of puja which the Sivacharyas had in circulation among themselves. To make

them sound authentic, they were said to have been culled from some agama, in this case the *Kirana*. The original was not easily available nor was easily verifiable. This only shows that such manuals and selections, though in use for a long time, are useless as source books for the puja rituals.

The *Agamarta Sangraha*, published by the Mysore University Oriental Institute is yet another such selection. It is a compilation from various *Paddhatis* and Agamas, said to have been made by Rishis such as Saunaka and Bodhayana. The first book (purva bhaga) thereof was edited by Ramaswami sastri of Kodikka and Mruthyunjaya sastri of Lakshminarayanapuram and published at Madras 1905. It contains the rules for conducting some 132 propitiatory rituals mostly for the welfare of individuals; these are therefore only in the nature of *kamya puja*. This has to be considered only as a paddhati and not as a regular agama selection.

21. SAIVAGAMA PARIBHASHA MANJARI

As the suffix *manjari* signifies this is a selection from the agamas. But this is made on a peculiar pattern. The book has been handsomely published by the French Institute of Indology, Pondichery in 1979 with the usual introductory matter, indexes and variant readings.

The manjari is said to be culled by a yogi named Vedajnana. *Veda* is *marai* in Tamil and Vedajnana is identified with Maraijnana desika, disciple of Vedajnana guru (or Marai Jnanasambandhar) both of whom lived in the 16th century[1]. The two probably lived in Chidambaram. The first Maraijnana is the author of a large number of Saiva theological treatises large and small on the four paths, *charya, kriya, yoga* and *jnana,* while the disciple has written an important commentary on *Sivajnana siddi* (printed). Vedajnana is also called Nigamajnana (Veda-nigama) and this author is credited with having written the *Saiva Kala viveka,* published in the nagari script with the commentary of Ganapati Bhatta by Sitarama Somayaji of Mysore in 1966. The author is credited with having written four more Sanskrit treatises (not printed).

This compilation, the *manjari,* is as said above, very peculiar.

1. A complete account of the life and work of the two Maraijnana munis may be found in my Tamil *History of Tamil Literature* 16th century Volume i pages 292-303, Volume 2 pages 201-237 and Volume 3 pages 26 to 48.

It does not treat the subjects of the Saiva Siddhanta in a subjectwise manner but in a *numberwise* manner. It has ten sections, each being a varga, Varga 1, 2, 3, 4 etc. upto 10. (He calls his book even a *nighantu* in the colophon). The first section deals with subjects that are only one - such as Siva, Sakti, mala, kriya and pratishtha. The tenth section deals with the ten homas, the ten *nirnayas*, the ten *lakshanas* of *dharma*, the ten *danas*, the ten *dikshas etc*. Under these numerical heads the author has attempted to collect agamic texts and cover the entire subject matter. Of course the *manjari* deals with the four paths-*Jnana*-knowledge, *Yoga*- fixation of the mind on the subject, *Kriya* or rituals, and *Charya*-discipline or behaviour.

Apart from the agamas, the compiler gives *Vayu samhita* from the *Siva purana* (*Vayu samhita* is said to be quasi-agamic) and *Kurma purana*. The *manjari* as a whole exalts the householder's life in preference to the ascetic, although both the writer and his guru were ascetics.

22. DIGESTS - SIDDHANTA SARAVALI

Digests of the agamas are called *nibandhas*. They are compilations of appropriate matter culled from many agamas. There are many such manuals or digests which either deal comprehensively with the entire subject matter of the agamas or some times deal only with specific subjects. Most of these manuals remain unpublished.

The digests are of course new writing of select matter taken from the agamas. A few digests of the agamas have however been published. The first place among them is taken by *Siddhanta Saravali* by Trilochana Sambhu (13th century). Within a short compass this book condenses beautifully all the thoughts of the four *padas* in the agamas. It is said that the author performed a penance and prayed to Siva through whom he obtained the third eye, in order that he might more effectively do the task of concentrating on the agamas and condensing them. Because of the third eye, he was called Trilochana Sivacharya. (Trilochana-three eyes; *Sara-avali* is arrangement of the substance.)

The entire book consists of the *Jnana pada* (27 *slokas*), the *Kriya pada* (90) the *Yoga pada* (8) and the *Charya pada* (41) in this order. The *Jnana pada* deals with the following subjects: the

three entities *Pati, Pasu* and *Pasc*, the three categories of souls, the tattvas, Siva's threefold functions and anugraha. The *Kriya pada* deals with the *dikshas, praasaada mantras, kalanyasa, antaryaga puja* and *bahiryaga puja*, invocation, *jcpa, agni karya*, again *dikshas*, the five *kalas* and *purnahuti*. The *Yoga* part deals with *nadi suddhi, Siva dhyana* and the five *avasthas*. The *Charya pada* deals with Sivalingas and the merit accruing from *Sivalinga puja*.

The author's disciple Ananta Siva has written a valuable and exhaustive commentary on the text. Herein he says that Rajendra Chola (1012-1044,) the son of Rajaraja I, who took out an expedition to the Ganges and assumed the title 'the Chola who brought the Ganga to his capital city,' also brought with him some sivacharyas from the Gangetic plain and settled them in the Kanchi area (Pallavanad) and in Cholanad.

The text and commentary with a Tamil translation were printed by Shanmukhasundara Mudaliyar in 1887 in the *grantha* script. It was reprinted by the South Indian Archakar Association in 1975 in the *grantha* script with the same translation.

23. SIDDHANTA SEKHARAM

Another such published digest is the *Siddhanta Sekharam* edited by K. Sitarama Somayaji and published as volume 20 in the *Manonmani granta mala* serics in Mysore in 1917 in good *nagari* script. This contains a useful introduction in Sanskrit.

Siddhanta Sekharam is a large work in three books or *kandas* with 6166 *slokas* distributed as shown below:

Kanda	Chapter or Part	Slokas
1. *Nitya kanda*	4	1083
2. *Naimittika kanda*	11	2630
3. *Kamya kanda*	26	2453
	41	6166

An ancestor of the author by name Narasimha is said to have written a manual called *Kalpasara* on the worship of Narasimha in the days of the Chalukya king, Pratapa Chakravartti of Kalyan (1138-50). His descendants were Bhaskara, Visvanatha, again Bhaskara and Visvanatha (all of Banaras); these hail in the line as father and son. So Visvanatha, the last of this line might have

lived by about 1225-1250 A.D. He says that he is the pupil of Krishna son of Janardana Chudamani and of another Krishna in Banaras. This book has been quoted by many *Dharma Sastra Nibandha* works of the 16-17th centuries. This no doubt deals with the usual four parts jnana, yoga, charya and kriya but not under these headings but under the three *kandas* mentioed above.

The *Nitya kanda* deals with the routine personal disciplines of the Saiva who has undergone the *diksha.*

The second section, the *Naimittika kanda* deals with the annual purificatory rites, like initiation of the pupils, the qualifications of the teachers, the different kinds of *dikshas, prayaschittas* or expiatory rituals and obsequial rites and the death anniversary or *srarddha* ceremonies, installation of the Siva linga and consecration of various forms of the linga and the several *murtis* or the various manifest forms of Siva, are also described in detail. It also deals with the installation of the *parivara devatas. Pratishtha* of Vishnu as a *parivara devata* is also mentioned here. Other complementary features such as the temple tank (*pushkarini*), flower garden (*nanda-vana*) flag staff (*dvaja sthamba*) are also dealt with. Festivals and repair and renovation are other important features. It deals also with the evolution of the *tattvas* (reals or categories) from Siva and deals elaborately about the worship of Siva.

The third section, the *Kamya kanda* describes the construction of the temples beginning with *bhu pariksha* or examination of the site and the soil, and *karshana* and ends with the consecration. Other particulars such as the types of lingas, the different manifest forms of Siva or Siva *murtas* are also given.

The Yoga part mentioned here is neither complete nor elaborate, having only a *sloka.*

It can be seem from the above remarks that the *charya* and *kriya* parts are dealt with elaborately while the *yoga* part is very scant. But the *jnana* part is also dealt with in detail in *paricheda* 2 of the *Naimittika kanda* where the *tattvas* and the *abhavas* are described. The author speaks in detail about the manifestation of the universe from the one Ultimate Truth which is Siva, through His Sakti. The ultimate Truth is the goal or attainment of the souls, on oneness with Siva, which may be termed a *Siva-advaita.* In this sense the author calls his philosophy Siddhanta, as distinguished from *Pasupata, Soma* and *Lakula* and also from *Dakshina, Vama* and *Misra.* He lays special emphasis on Siva-Surya. He says that

Saivam emphasizes *Subhatva* or *Sivatva* while *Pasupata*, *Soma*, and *Vama* emphasize *Raudratva*. Again Saivam is of four categories-*Siddhantam* which is supreme, while *Vama* gives importance only to Sakti, *Dakshinam* gives importance to Bhairava, and *Misram* to Saptamata; hence only Siddhantam is *Vedasammatam* (acceptance according to the Vedas).

The author apparently seeks to unify the Vedic and the Agamic cults in this digest. He calls himself and his father an ubhaya-vedantin. In Tamilnad, this term in general is applied by the Sri Vaishnavas to declare that a preceptor is master in both the Sanskrit Veda and the Tamil Veda, the *Nalayirapprabandham*. But such a term has no where been applied to the Saivas. Besides the author, hailing from Banras, could not have had the Tamil veda (*Tirumurai*) in mind. In the line of Sri Kantha who does not see any difference between the Veda and the Agama but sees them as one, this author probably means the Upanishadic Vedanta and the Agamic Vedanta (both of course Sanskrit) and so calls himself ubhaya vedantin, both Sanskrit Vedanta and Tamil Vedanta.

Agama Vacana Bhushanam is a small manual of importnt texts (with Tamil translation for the puja portion) selected and translated by M. V. Thathachariyar and published by the South Indian Arcakar Association. It has 66 slokas in grantha script of which the first 64 have also been rendered into Tamil.

24. TRANSLATION OF THE AGAMAS

Tamil Translations

Metrical translation of the agamas into Tamil seems to have been attempted from the 14th century. The writing of the Tamil Siddhanta sastras in the 12th to the 14th centuries perhaps gave a fillip to the agama studies. *Sivadharmottaram*[1] is an upagama of *Sarvoktam* (25th in the series). This has been translated into Tamil in the *viruttam* meyre in 1222 verses, including an invocatory chapter, by Maraijnanasambandhar (16th century), a writer of a large number of Tamil theological works besides a Sanskrit work on Siva puja.[2] The Tamil work had been published with a

1. *Sivadharmottaram*, edited by Mayilai Vidvan Shanmukhampillai, Madras, 1888 verse 15.

2. He has been noted upon under the head 21, *Saivagama Paribhasha manjari* in the section of Selections from the Agamas (page 89).

commentary by a disciple of the author, in 1888. The commentator says that this is one of the five upagamas under *Santana Sarvoktam*, namely *Isanam*, *Sivadharmam*, *Sivadharmottaram*, *Divyaproktam* and *Kubheram; Sivadharamam*, and *Kubheram* are also known as *Vayu-proktam* and *Sarvodgitam*. This upagama deals extensively with *Sivapunya* and *papa*, that is, acts of merit and sin, with reference to Siva, and the expiatory ceremonies for getting over the evil effects of sinful acts. The Tamil book is held in high esteem among the Saiva community. The poetic quality of the book is also good.

Sarva jnanottara and *Devi kalottara* are two other upagamas which had been translated into Tamil verse in the 14th century. It is however, to be noted that their names as such do not find a place in the list of the 207 upagamas. The Sanskrit text of the first in 240 slokas has been printed several times. The two have respectively 71 and 69 verses in Tamil. Both have been printed with old and modern commentaries. These two contain only the *jnana pada* and are philosophical treatises. The *Sarva jnanottaram* has been held in high esteem by Sivajnana swami, who has summarised it in his large *bhashya* on the Tamil *Sivajnana – bodham* (sixth chapter).

Six of the chapters of the Vidya pada of *Mrgendram* translated into Tamil blank verse by Velliambalavana Tambiran (c. 1700) a prolific theological writer of Dharmapuram, have been published.[1] He is said to have translated the remaining chapters and the other three parts also. But they have not been published so far.

The *Sata manimalai* of Sivaprakasa swami, translation of the *Sata ratna sangraha* of Umapati was mentioned earlier. The selection of slokas here is as follows: Devikalottara 1, Deviyamala 3, Kalottara 1, Matanga 9, Mrgendra 24, Kiranam 12, Niswasakarika 3, Parakhya 11, Sarvajnanottara 1, Swamyambhuva 22, Visvasakarika 5 and Visvasarottara 5 verses.

Sivapunniya thelivu is a small poem of the 16th century by an unknown author, who was a disciple of Maraijnana Sambandhar of Chidambaram. In the 144 simple verses of the poem, he enumerates the merit earned by devotees who perform various

1. The available portion has been published at Dharmapuram in 1946. It is preceded by a prefatory section of 25 verses dealing in general terms with a teacher and disciple. The first chapter says that this agama consists of 11000 verses taught by Indra to sage Bharadvaja; it also explains why the principal agama came to be called Kamika and this one the Mrgendram. It contains 113 verses, closely following as many verses in the original.

virtuous and meritorious services to Siva and His devotees. He says therein that he is extracting these thoughts from *Chintya Visva Sadahya* agama. In two verses of the book, he lists the merits earned by one who gives away copies of the agamas and by one who studies the agamas.

The principal agamas do not appear to have been translated into Tamil verse. In modern days, the Sivajnanabodham press has published explanatory prose translations of the Purva Kamika, Paushkara and the Mrgendra (vidyapada only). The last 16 chapters of Uttara-Kamika have been translated as chapters 22-37 of the Tamil Lingapurana by Prince Varagunarama Pandya in the 16th century. Though many have studied the purana, the fact that these chapters are a close translation of the agama sections has not been noticed sofar. The Jnana puja vidhi is a short Tamil treatise of 18 verses written in the 14th century; it is said to contain the essence of the Vatula; this has several commentaries.

Meymoli Charitai, a Tamil metrical Siddhanta work is said to be a free rendering of the thoughts of *Chintyagama*. This book has been printed in the Madras University Tamil Departmental journal, *Tamil Ayvu*. There is also said to be a summary of the Chintyagama in 30 quatrains; parts of some subjects purporting to be taken from *Chintyagama* in Tamil prose have been published.[1]

The *Sivarchana chandrika* of *Appayya* Dikshitar is a famous work on Siva worship, based on the agamas and it had been published with a Tamil translation by the Devakottai Sangham (1922). But another work of the same name (aparently an anthology) not so well known, is the book by one Sadyojata sivacharya published in the last decade of the 19th century. It contains about four thousand verses, distributed over about ten chapters. Of these, the first half is a selection of chapters from the *Sakalagama sangraha* while the remaining chapters are from the *Ajitagama*. The translation follows the text verse by verse.

The Sakalagama sara was a Tamil work in the kural venba metre by Marai jnana sambandha (author of Saiva Samaya neri). It is quoted very often in late exegetical writings but the book itself seems to be lost today. This author was a great scholar in Sanskrit and has rendered into Tamil in his several books many thoughts from the agamas.

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1. By V. R. Deivasikhamani Gounder in a Tamil journal.

25. ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

The Vidya pada of the *Mrgendra* was translated into English by M. Narayananswami Aiyar in the pages of the *Siddhanta Dipikai* in 1900-1; but it has not been published in book form.

J. W. A. curtis of the Washigton University has brought out in about 240 pages an annotated translation of the 30th chapter of the *Purva karana* dealing with the *Archanavidhi* in 450 verses.[1] His chief concern here is the architectural motivation in the chapter. The four or five introductory chapters of the book deal with Saiva siddhanta and worship.

The *Sataratna sangraha*, being a compilation of 100 slokas selected by Umapati Sivacharya and annotated by him (early 14th century) has been translated with the commentary by Professor P. Tirujnanasambandan and published by the University of Madras in 1973 in a handsome volume.

Dr. Surendranath Das Gupta has summarised in Engish the contents of the *Matanga Parameswara agama, Mrgendra, Paushkaragama, Vatulagama* and *Vatulatantram* in the first chapter of his History of Indian Philosophy, Volume V.[2]

The Agama publications of the French Institute of Indology at Pondichery have elaborate introduction and notes in French but no translation.

26. THE PUBLISHERS

K. Shanmukha sundara Mudaliyar

Konraimanagaram (Konnur) Shanmukhasundara Mudaliyar was the pioneer in the field of the publication of the agama texts. With extraordinary love and religious devotion to the cause, he set about printing the agamas. The degree of his devotion may be inferred from the very name of his press, the *Sivanjnana bodham* press. Grantha was the script then employed for any Sanskrit writing in the Tamilnad and so all his agama publications were in that script. We need hardly say that the agamas were then unknown and unheard of even among the scholars, outside a small

1. *Motivations of Temple Architecture in Saiva Siddhanta*, J. W. A. Curtis, Hoe & Co., Madras, December 1974.

2. Published posthumously by the Cambridge University Press in 1922 and reissued many times.

dedicated group of Sivacharyas who had passed the knowledge from father to son or disciple in a gurukula system.; it was a time when even the *Tamil* Siddhanta Sastras were unknown to the Saivas. Mudaliyar printed only 200 or 250 copies of the agamas. With very great perseverance he collected the manuscripts from Madras in the north to Tirunelveli in the south, at a time when communication and transport were not easy (between 1890 – 1900). Himself, and after him his grand nephew, Mayilai Alagappa Mudaliyar, published three principal agamas the *Kamika*, the *Karana* and the *Suprabheda* and five upagamas the *Mrgendra*, the *Vatula*, the *Paushkara*, the *Kumaratantra* and the *Sakalagama sangraha*, besides a large number of Saiva sastras, Tamil and Sanskrit. Sometimes they published Tamil renderings also. Of course there was no recognition for their work and on the death of these pioneers, their press ceased functioning, in the third decade of this century.

A remarkable feature of the Sivajnana bodham press editions of the agamas is that they always give in an introduction an elaborate synopsis of the text. This is usually very well done and helps even the casual reader to have a comprehensive idea of the scope and content of the agama.

Sivagama Paripalana Sangham, Devakottai

Then a number of religious and philanthropic minded members of the Nagarathar community in Chettinad banded themselves into a group known as the Sivagama Siddhanta Paripalana Sangham, Devakottai, and published a number of agamas – the *Kirana*, the *Matanga Paramesvara* and the *Mrgendra*, and other Sanskrit Saiva works, both in the grantha and in the nagari scripts. Sometimes they published Tamil versions also. The Second World War reversed the fortunes of this community whose business in Burma and the Far East had completely collapsed and so the Sangham almost ceased its publication activities.

The French Institute of Indology, Pondichery

Next came the French Institute of Indology in Pondichery under the able and enthusiastic lead of Dr. J. Filliozat ably assisted by Professor N. R. Bhat and others. They have published in handsome nagari script sevoral volumes of agamas – the Raurava (2 parts), the Ajita (2 parts), the Matanga Paramesvara, the Mrgendra, the Sardha Trisati Kalottara and the Saivagama paribhasha

manjari, and plan to bring out more,. It is noteworthy that the publications are subsidized by the Paris University. All the texts give many variant readings collected from several manuscripts, and also give a list of the manuscripts used, and very useful tables, illustrations and indices besides parallel passages from the other Agamas.

Besides they have also published the *Somasambhu paddhati* (in 2 parts), Sivayoga ratnam, *Mayamata* (a treatise an sculpture) etc. The publications have laid the Saiva world under a deep debt of gratitude to the Institute.

The South Indian Archakar Association, Madras

The Sivacharyar have banded themselves into a body known as the South Indian Archakar Association and under the leadership of the aged Secretary C. Swaminatha Gurukkal, Madras, they have published the *Kamika* (in grantha and in nagari), *Kumara tantra*, *Makutagama* and the *Sakalagama sara sangraha;* they have published scores of minor manuals and treatises on temple worship, all in the Sanskrit language.

A lone private publisher was Ambalavana Navalar of Jaffna who had his own press in Chidambaram and published the large *Paushkara samhita* with St. Umapati's Sanskrit commentary in 1927. He had also published *Aghora Sivacharya paddhati* with the Sanskrit commentary of Tiruvarur Nirmalamani Desikar in 1927. He was a *sannyasi;* he called his press the *Jnanasambandham* press and the very street where his press was located is called even to day Umapati vidhi. (It was and is only Umaiyal lane.) Sometimes he himslly composed the matter and he meticulonsly supervised the whole printing.

27. THE UNPUBLISHED AGAMAS

We have seen in detail the various published agamas-nine principal agamas, five upagamas and three selections. The *Rauravagama* edition lists in an appendix a large number of agamas consulted in manuscript.[1] Among the principal agamas, the

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1. The French Institute edition: 1961, page 209-212. This edition contains besides a very comprehensive table of the agamas showing the name of the agama, its origin-Siva or Rudrabheda, the organ of Sadasiva from which it came, the persons to whom revealed, the number of the upagamas and their names. This is a very valuable and useful document, copied in Sanskrit from the Tamil table given in the *Kamikagama* edition.

following unpublished agamas are mentioned: Amsumat, Chandrajnana, Chintya, Dipta, Makuta, Matanga Kriyapada, Sahasara, Sukshma, Swamyambhuva, Vira and Yogaja. The following are among the upagamas mentioned: *Achintya Visvasadakhya* and *Nisvasakarika*. Other texts bearing on the agamas are the following: *Agamartha sangraha* and *Amsumatkasyapa*. The *Ashta prakarana* authors and commentators (13-14th centuries) and Sivagrayogi (16th century) quote many verses from many agamas and upagamas, some of them not available today.

The Institute appears to possess all the 28 agamas in copies they had made from the originals obtained from the Sivacharyas. Hence it can be seen that the tradition that the Saivagamas are 28 is a fact and not a mere legend. Although the Institute has spared no efforts, or time or money to get at all the parts of all the agamas, they are not likely to have exhausted all the sources, where the agama manuscripts may be owned or available. Many manuscripts, we are sure, are still crumbling with private individuals and private library collections particularly among the Sivacharyas.

28. TABLE OF THE 28 SIDDHANTA AGAMAS AND THEIR UPAGAMAS

The 28 Saivagamas (Siddhanta) belong to the two categories, Sivabheda and Rudraheda, revealed by Siva and revealed by Rudra. The Sivabheda agamas are ten, five each from the two faces of Siva - Sadyojata and Vamadeva, while the Rudrabheda agamas are the remaining eighteen, five from the Aghora face, five from the Tatpurusha face and eight from the Isana face. Almost all the major agamas give the same details about the 28 agamas in their chapter entitled Tantravatara-patalam. The 1909 edition of the Kamikagama Purvabhaga prepared by K. Shanmukhasundra Mudaliyar and printed and published by his grand nephew Mayilai Alagappa Mudaliyar gives details of the agamas elaborately on pages 11-38. The detailed account given below is taken from this edition of the Kamika text.

In the details given hereunder, (a) gives the total number of slokas said to have been in the original agama, (b) the part of the organ or form of Siva which this agama represents, (c) the Rshi or celestials through whom the agamas were propagated on earth and (d) the upagamas which originated from the particular agama.

I. Revealed by the Sadyojata mukha (1-5):

The following five agamas were revealed to Kausika rshi. Each of the agamas was taught to the three celestials who propagagate it on the earth.

1. Kamikam: (a) Parardham (100,000 billion). (b) Feet. (c) Pranava, Trikala and Hara. (d) Vaktaram, Bhairavottaram and Narasimham - 3.

Narasimham is also known as Mrgendram (simham, the lion is Mrgendra, king among the beasts). It is said here that Pranava gave the Agama to Trikala and he in turn gave it to Hara through whom the agamas came to be known to the ordinary mortals; similarly in all the following agamas.

2. Yogajam: (a) Laksham (100,000; also said to be 2 lakhs). (b) Shin. (c) Sudhakhya (Sudha), Bhasma, Vibhu (also called Prabhu: (b) Vinasikrottaram, Taram, Santam, Santati and Atmayogam - 5.

3. Chintyam: (a) Laksham (variously said as three lakshs or even one thousand). (b) Toes. (c) Dipta (or Sudipta), Gopati, Ambika. (d) Suchintyam, Subhagam, Vamam, Papanasam, Parodbhavam (or Surodbhavam) and Amritam (Sudhabimbam) - 6.

4. Karanam: (a) Koti (one crore, some say four crores). (b) Ankle. (c) Karana, Sarva (or Sarva rudra), Prajapati (or Chatur vaktra). (d) Pavanam, Maranam, Daurgam, Mahendram, Bhimasamhita, Karanam and Vidvesham (or Vidyesam) - 7.

5. Ajitam: (a) Ayutam (10000 or even 100,000). (b) Knees. (c) Susicha, Siva, Achyuta. (d) Prabhutam, Parodbhutam, Parvatisamhita (Parvatisa samhita) and Padma samhita - 4.

II. Revealed by the Vamadeva mukha (6-10):

These five agamas were taught to Kasyapa rshi. He taught each of the agamas to the three celestials (c).

6. Diptam: Niyutam (one lakh). (b) Thighs. (c) Isa (Isana), Trimurti, Hutasana. (d) Ameyam, Abdam (or Sabdam or Abjam), Achchadyam, Asamkhyam, Amitaujasam, Anantam, Madhavodbhutam, Adbhutam, Akshatam (or Mrutam) - 9.

7. Sukshmam: (a) Padma (one crore crores). (b) Guhyam (genitive organ). (c) Sukshma, Vaisravana (Bhava), Prabhancha. (d) Suskshmam - 1.

8. Sahasram: (a) Sankham (one million million). (b) Hip. (c) Kala, Bhima, Dharma. (d) Atitam (Ajitam), Mangalam (Angasamjnyam, Amalam or Mandalam), Suddham (Visuddham), Aprameyam, Jatibhak, Prabuddham, Vibudham, Hastam, (Hasta-suddham), Alankaram and Subhodhakam – 10.

9. Amsumad: (a) Five lakhs. (b) Back. (c) Amsu (Ambu), Ugra, Ravi. (d) Vidyapuranatantram, Vasavam, Nilalohitam, Prakaranam, Bhutatantram, Atmalamkaram, Kasyapam, Gautamam, Aindram, Braahmam, Vasishtam and Isanottraram (Aisanam)– 12.

10. Suprabhedam: (a) Three crores. (b) Navel. (c) Dasesa, Ganesa, Sasi. (d) Suprabhedam – 1.

B. RUDRA BHEDA-AGAMAS – 18

III. Revealed by the Aghora mukha (11–15):

These five agamas were taught to Bharadvaja rshi. He taught each of the agamas to the celesrials (c) two each.

11. Vijayam: (a) Three crores (Twelve crores). (b) Stomach. (c) Anadirudra, Paramesvara. (d) Udbhavam, Sowmyam (or Bhavam), Aghoram, Mrtyunasanam, Kubheram (or Bhavam), Mahaghoram, Vimalam (Paramesvaram) and Vijayam – 8.

12. Nisvasam: (a) One crore. (b) Heart. (c) Dasarna, Sailasambhava. (d) Nisvasam, Nisvasottaram (Uttaranisvasam), Nisvasamukhodayam, Nisvasa nayanam, Nisvasakarika, Ghora Samjnanam, Yamakyam and Guhyam – 8.

13. Svayambhuvam: (a) One and a half crores. (b) Stanyas (nipples). (c) Nidhana, Padmasambhava. (d) Prajapatimatam, Padmam, Nalinodbhavam (Suyambhuvam) – 3.

14. Analam (the Kamikagama mentions this as Agneyam): (a) Thirty thousand. (b) Eye. (c) Vyoma, Hutasana. (d) Agneyam (or Vyomatantram) – 1.

15. Viram: (a) 100,000. (b) Neck. (c) Tejas, Prajapati. (d) Prastaram, Pullam (or Pullamallam,) Amalam, Prabodhakam, Amoham (or Pramoham), Mohasamyam, Hakatam, Sakatadhikam, Bhadram, Vilasanam, Viram, Halam and Bodhakam–13.

IV. Revealed by the Tatpurusha mukha (16–20):

These five agamas were taught to Gautama rshi who taught each of the agamas to the celestrials (c).

16. Rauravam: (a) Arbudashtakam (8000 crores). (b) Ears. (c) Brahmanesa, Nanidikesvara. (d) Kalakhyam (Kalatitam), Kaladahanam, Rauravam, Rauravottaram, Mahakalamatam, Aindram (Chandıam) – 6.

17. Makutam: (a) 100, 000. (b) Crown. (c) Siva, Mahadeva (d) Makutam and Makutottaram – 2.

18. Vimalam: (a) 300,000. (b) Arms. (c) Sarvamatra, Virabhadra. (d) Anantam, Bhogam, Akrantam, Vrshapingam, Vishodaram, Vrshodbhutam, Raudram, Sudantam, Dharanam, Arevatam, Atikrantam, Attahasam, Bhadravidham, Achintam, (Architam), Alamkrutam and Vimalam (Tantram). – 16.

19. Chandrajnanam: (a) 3 Crores. (b) Chest. (c) Ananta, Brhaspati. (d) Sthiram, Sthanu, Mahantam, Varunam, Nandikesvaram, Ekapadapuranam, Sankaram, Nilarudrakam, Sivabhadram, Kalpabhedam, Srimukham, Sivasasanam, Sivasekharam and Devimatam – 14.

20. Mukhabimbam: (a) 100,000. (b) Face. (c) Prasanta, Dadhichi. (d) Chaturmukham, Samstomam, Pratibimbam, Ayogajam, Atmalamkaram, Vayavyam, Tautikam, Tutinirakam, Kuttimam, Tulayogam, Kalatyayam, Mahasauram, Pattasekharam, Nairrutam and Mahavidya – 15.

V. Revealed by the Isana mukha (21–28):

These eight agamas were taught to Agastya rshi. He taught each of them to the celestials (c).

21. Prodgitam: (a) 300,000. (b) Tongue. (c) Sulin, Kavacha. (d) Varaham, Kavacham, Pasabandham, Pingalamatam, Ankusam, Dandadharam, Dhanurdharam, Sivajnanam, Vijnanam, Srikalajnanam, Ayurvedam, Dhanurvedam, Sarpadamshtravibhedanam, Gitakam, Bharatam and Atodyam – 16.

22. Lalitam: (a) 8000. (b) Cheeks. (c) Alayesa, Rudrabhairava (Lalita). (d) Lalitam, Lalitottaram and Kaumaram –3.

23. Siddham: (a) One and a half crores. (b) Forehead. (c) Bindu, Chandesvara. (d) Sarottaram, Ausanasam (Ausanottaram), Salabhedam and Sasimandalam – 4.

24. Santanam: (a) 6000. (b) Kundala (Earrings). (c) Sivanishtha, Samsapayana (Asamvaya). (d) Lingadyaksham, Suadyaksham, Amalesvaram, Sankaram, Asankhyam, Anilam and Dvandvam – 7.

25. Sarvoktam: (also called Narasimham): (a) 200,000. (b) Sacred thread (upavitam). (c) Somadeva, Nrusimha. (d) Sivadharmottaram, Vayuproktam, Divyaproktam, Isanam and Sarvodgitam – 5.

26. Paramesvaram: (a) 12 lakhs. (b) Garland. (c) Sridevi, Usanas. (d) Matangam, Yakshinipadmam, Paramesvaram, Pushkaram, Suprayogam, Hamsam and Samanyam – 7.

27. Kiranam: (a) 5 crores. (b) Ornaments. (c) Devatarkshya (Devavibhava), Samvartana. (d) Garudam, Nairrutam, Nilam, Ruksham, Bhanukam, Dhenukam, Kalakhyam, Prabuddham and Buddham –9.

28. Vatulam: (a) 100,000. (b) Garment. (c) Siva, Mahakala. (d) Vatulam, Vatulottaram, Kalajnanam (Kalottaram), Prarohitam, Sarvam, Dharmatmakam, Nityam, Srestham, Suddham, Mahananam, Visvam and Visvatmakam – 12.

The names of many of the upagamas vary in the different agama lists. Only a few of the variant names have been indicated above.

The *upagamas* represent the sandal paste and other aromatic substances and flowers worn by Siva. The Siddhanta which is the Jnanapada of the Agamas is said to be the *Naivedya.*

[The total number of Upagamas is 207. But there seems to be a discrepancy in the calculation both in the Kamikagama edition of Mudaliyar and the Rauravagama table of the French Institute edition. Mudaliyar's edition leaves out the single upa-agamas Sukshmam, Suprebedham and Analam and takes the upagamas as 208; this is obviously wrong; that total can only be 205. The Rauravagama table correctly gives the total as 207 but leaves out the name Suprabhedam as an upagama under the same agama; this is merely an error in printing.]

It is noted in the *Kamikagama* editon that in the cases of no. 7 *Sukshma,* 10. *Suprabheda,* and 14. *Analam* there is no upagama. This is obviously wrong, because, each has one upagama in the same name as the agama itself. Another important feature is that many sciences and arts are noted as upagamas: eg. see *Ayurvedam, Dhanurvedam* and *Bharatam* under 21 – *Prodgitam.* It is for scholars to determine now whether this *Bharatam* could be the same as the *Natya sastra* of the author of the same name.

29. NUMBER OF SLOKAS (available)

(In the published Agamas, their four padas and their script.)

	Agama	Script	Jnana	Yoga	Kriya	Charya	Total
1.	Kamika-Purva	g&n	–	–	5166	–	12000
	Kamika-uttara	g	–	–	6477	–	–
					357 lost		
2.	Karana-purva	g	–	–	10528	–	10528
	Karana-Uttara	g	–	–	5623	–	5623
3.	Ajita I	n	–	–	2871	–	2871
	Ajita II	n	–	–	1456	–	1456
4.	Sahasragama	n	–	–	550	–	550
5.	Suprabheda	g	352	322	3167	825	4666
6.	Raurava – I	n	344	–	847	–	1191
	Raurava – II	n	–	–	1249	–	1249
7.	Makutam-Purvabhaga	g	–	–	1979	–	1979
8.	Paramesvara Matanga	n	1530	–	–	–	1530
9.	Kirana	g	416	220	584	771	1991
UPAGAMAS:							
1.	Mrgendra	n&g	445	65	551	130	1191
2.	Vatula	g	782	–	–	–	782
3.	Paushkara	g	937	–	–	–	937
4.	Kumaratantra	g&n	–	–	3524	–	3524
5.	Sardha-trisati Kalottara	n	–	–	350	–	350
6.	Sarvajnanottara	g	240	–	–	–	240
			5046	607	44909	3754	54316
7.	Sivadharmottara (Tamil verses*)	–	–	–	–	*1222	–
	Sakalagamasara Sangraha	g	–	–	–	1678	1678
	Sata Ratna Sangraha	n	100	–	–	–	100
	Saivagama Paribhasha manjari	n	1134	–	–	–	1134

g – grantha; n – nagari.

30. PRINTING HISTORY OF THE AGAMAS

Given below are (1) a History of the Translation in Tamil and in English and (2) a History of the Printing of the Agamas and Upagamas, with the seript, granta or nagari, the name of the publisher and the year of printing.

A. TRANSLATION OF THE AGAMAS

1. TAMIL TRANSLATIONS

1. KAMIKAGAMA: *Purvabhaga* only: *granta* script. Translation published by K. Shanmukha Sundara Mudaliayar in 1901. Word for woıd meaning, paraphrase and fine elucidation. The same translation was re-issued by the South Indian Archakar Association, Madras 1977, grantha.

2. KARANAGAMA: *Nityarchana Vidhi patala* only: 123 grantha script. Rajalinga Gurukkal, Tiruppur 1969.

3. SAHASRAGMA: *Ashta bandhana vidhi patalam* only; *devanagari* script. Swaminatha grukkal of Dharmapuram, in the pages of the journal Jnanasambandham, 1970-71.

4. MRGENDRAGAMA: *Vidya pada*, with the commentary of Bhatta Narayana Kantha ; *grantha* script. Edited by K. Shanmukha Sundara Mudaliyar. Published by his grandnephew Mayilai Alahappa Mudaliyar, 1926.

5. PAUSHKARAGAMA: *Vidya pada; grantha* script. Translation published by K. Shanmukha sundara Mudaliyar, 1918.

6. SATARATNA SANGRAHA: (Selection by St. Umapati Sivacharya) Metrical translation by Sivaprakasa swami (17th century) in the name of *Satamani malai*. Text not given. Published by Mayilam Vira Saiva Mutt, 1944.

7. SIDDHANTA SARAVALI: *grantha* script. Translation published by K. Shanmuga Sundara Mudaliyar, 1887. The same translation re-issued by the South India Archakar Association, Madras, 1975, *grantha.*

2. ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

1. KARANAGAMA: *Nitya puja vidhi patala* only: *devanagari* script. 450 *slokas*: J. W. V. Curtis, 1974. Hoe & Co. Madras.

2. MRGENDRAGAMA: *Vidya pada:* K. Narayana Swamy Aiyar, 1900–1. Text not given. Siddhanta Dipikai.

3. SATARATNA SANGRAHA: Selection by St. Umapati Sivacharya with his commentary, *Ullekhini.* Text alone in *devanagari* script, commentary in English Translation by Professor P. Tirujnanasambandhan, University of Madras, 1973.

B. THE PUBLISHED EDITIONS OF THE AGAMAS (TEXT ALONE WITHOUT TRANSLATION)

The following list shows the agamas whose text alone had been printed so far. The list under Translations should be taken as additions to this list.

1. (a) KAMIKAGAMA: *Purvabhaga: Nagari* script. South India Archakar Association, Madras 1975.

   (b) *Uttara Bhaga: Grantha* script. K. Shanmukha Sundara Mudaliyar 1909.

2. (a) KARANAGAMA: *Purvabhaga grantha* script. Edited by K. Shanmukha sundara Mudaliyar, published by M. Alahappa Mudaliyar 1920.

   (b) KARANAGAMA UTTARA BHAGA: *Grantha* script. Edited by K. Shamukha sundara Mudaliyar, published by M. Alahappa Mudaliyar 1928.

3. (a) AJITAGAMA: Part I. *Kriya* pada: *Devanagari* script. French Institute of Indology, Pondicherry, 1964.

   (b) AJITAGAMA: Part II: do. French Institute of Indology, Pondicherry, 1977.

4. SUPRABHEDAGAMA: *Grantha* script. M. Alahappa Mudaliyar 1929.

5. (a) RAURAVAGAMA: VIDYA PADA:Part I *Devanagari* script: French Institute of Indology, Pondichery 1961.

   (b) RAURAVAGAMA —Do. Part II *Devanagari* script. The French Institute of Indology, Pondichery 1972.

6. (a) Matanga PARAMESVARA: *Vidapada*: Deva nagari script. Sivagama Paripalana Sangham, Devokottai 1928.

(b) Matanga PARAMESVARA Vidya Pada: wilh the commentary of Bhatta Rama Kantha. *Devanagari* script, The French Institute of Indology 1977.

7. MAKUTAGAMA: *Purva bhaga* (*Kriyapada*): South Indian Archakar Association 1977, grantha script.

8. KIRANAGAMA: *Grantha* script. Sivagama Paripalana Sangham, Devakottai 1932.

9. (a) MRGENDRAGAMA: *vidyapada* and *yoga pada* with 2 commentaries: *Devanagari* script. Sivagama Paripalana Sangham Devakottai 1928.

(b) MRGENDRAGAMA, Charya pada and Kriya pada. Nagari script with the Commentary of Bhatha Narayana Kantha. French Institute of Indology, Pandichery 1962.

10. (a) VATULA SUDDHAKHYA: With commentary; grantha script. M. Alahappa Mudaliyar 1921.

(b) VATULA SUDDHAKHYA: *Nagari* script. Tala-k kadu Krishna Sastrigal, Bangalore 1958.

11. PAUSHKARAGAMA: With St. Umapati's commentary, Ambalavana navalar. Chidambaram 1925, *grantha* script.

12. KUMARA TANTRAM: Grantha script. K. Shanmukha Sundara Mudaliyar.

Re-issued by South Indian Archakar Association, 1974, nagari script.

13. SAKALAGAMA SARA SANGRAHA: *Grantha*. K. Shanmukha Sundara Mudaliyar 1900; re-issued, *grantha* script. South Indian Archakar Association 1974.

C. THE AGAMAS PUBLISHED WITH CLASSICAL COMMENTARIES

1. (a) MRGENDRAGAMA VIDYAPADA: Commentary by Bhatta Narayana Kantha. — 3 under A.

(b) MRGENDRAGAMA VIDYAPADA AND YOGA PADA: Commentary by Bhatta Narayana kantha, and a second *dipika* by Aghora Sivacharya. — 9 (a) under B.

(c) MRGENDRAGAMA KRIYA PADA AND CHARYA PADA: Commentary by Bhatta Narayana kantha. — 9 (b) under B.

2. PAUSHKARAGAMA: Vritti by Umapati Sivacharya. — 11 under B.

3. VATULA SUDDHAKHYA: Commentary (author not known). — 10 under B.

4. MATANGA PARAMESVARAM VIDYA PADA: Commentary by Bhatta Rama kantha. — 6 (b) under B.

5. SATA RATNA SANGRAHA: *Ullekhini* by Umapati Sivacharya. — 6 under A.

SECTION - 3

The Other Systems

This section will principally deal with all other systems of religion and philosophy in Tamil nad, excluding the Agamic Siddhanta or Saiva Siddhanta. We have here first a note on the other schools of Saivism, where several schools are just mentioned. One of the Siddanta Sastras (Tamil). *Sankalpanirakaranam* of St. Umapati Sivacharya, itself mentions eight Saiva schools (omitting *Mayavada* out of the nine mentioned by him). A brief reference is here made to several schools of Saivism. Das Gupta says in clear terms that the various other schools have no philosophical doctrines (except perhaps the Pasupata school). A second note deals with *Pratyabhijna*.

The next note deals with the Sakta agamas and cult. The worship of Sakti is there in the Saiva religion as part of Siva worship. The Vaishnavagama is the subject of the fourth note. *Vaikanasa* and *Pancharatra* are touched upon briefly. The *Tenkalai* and the *Vadakalai* sects are just mentioned. The essential difference between the two is in this that *Vadakalai* recognizes *Sri* (Lakshmi) as the mediator with the Lord for the soul's release (*purushakara*), just like grace or Sakti in Saivism, while *Tenkalai* holds Sri to be merely one in the category of the souls (jiva).

The Sankara advaita school is opposed by Saivism and Vaishnavism, although it has wide philosophic recognition. In a land where theism is in the blood and temples abound in thousands, even long before the advent of Sankara, pure monism could never hold the field. The Vira Saiva school is a very late branch from Saivism having some peculiar tenets of its own.

The *Panchayatana puja* is much talked of in the modern day and the seventh note is on this; this informs the *agamikas* what their position is with reference to this puja. The last note merely points out what is *Shad-darsana* and what is *Shan-mata*.

1. SIDDHANTA AND THE OTHER SAIVA SCHOOLS

A study of the Saivagamas will not be complete without a reference to the various schools of Saivism, mentioned in other types of religious literature. At the outset, we should say that the 28 Agamas treat only of the Siddhanta school and do not refer to the other schools at all. The Saiva Siddhanta, with its emphasis on the three eternal entities, *Pati*, *pasu*, and *pasa*-God, soul and matter–on temple worship and on the guru as the earthly manifestation of God, seems to be quite an indigenous system of philosophy expounded in the agamas by the various seers who had apparently all hailed from the Tamil country. The fact that they wrote all their treatises in the Sanskrit language in no whit detracts from their Tamilian character.

The six countenances of Siva (the faces facing the four directions and the uplifted and the downward faces) are said to have given rise to the six sub-sects of Saivism – the eastern face the Saiva, the southern the Kalamukha, the western the Pasupata, the northern the Mahavrta, the uplifted the Bhairava and the downward the Vama.[1] The table gives the faces, postures and the sects revealed by them.

Direction	*Murti*	*Posture*	*Sect*	*Colour*	*Puja*
North eastern (upward)	Isana	Dancing (Natana)	Bhairava	Pearlwhite	Bhairava
East	Tat-purusha	Seated	Saiva	Golden	Siva
South	Aghora	Sadasiva (linga)	Kala-mukha	Black	Vira-bhadra
West	Vamadeva	Seated	Mahavrta	White	Skanda
North	Sadyojata	Standing	Pasupata	Red	Ganapati
Down ward	Adho-mukha	Sleeping	Vama	—	Sakti

Madhava (14th century) in his *Sarvadarsana sangraha* mentions the Saivagamas. Ramanuja mentions the Kapalika and the Kalamukha and calls them anti-vedic. The Kapalikas indulged in

1. From a *Dakshinagama vachana* quoted by Velliambala Tambiran.

horrid practices of drinking and indulging in sex appetite and living in an unclean manner. The Kapalikas and the Kalamukhas had no distinct philosophical views. The Saiva school, in other words the Agamic Saivism, belongs to the Tamil country; the Pasupata to Gujarat, the *Pratyabhijna* to Kashmir; later Vira Saiva to the Kannada area. The Kapalikas in the Maharashtra area seem to have been called the Mahavratins. Bhairava as a deity is installed in all Siva temples, but there is no account anywhere of a Bhairava cult or its doctrines.[1] The *Vama* might have referred to the Sakta cult. As Sakti was considered to be the in separable part of Siva, the Sakti cult also seems to have been generally regarded as part of Saivism.

It has been stated that in some well known temples in South India, the ancient blood rites and drunken orgies are permitted to be revived yearly as a compromise with the aboriginal worshipper.[2] Blood rites were indeed associated with the temples of Mari and Draupadi among the people in the lower strata of society; they also formed part of the rite of *veri-adal* in Tamil literary convention relating to love poetry. But they certainly had nothing to do with Siva temples and no where are they even hinted at in the agamas. The orgies of the Kapalikas included the smearing of the body with ashes. The Saiva emblems emphasized in the agamas are three – the sacred ash, the rudraksha beads and the Siva mantra. These are inseparable elements in the Siddhanta School. The ash is adopted by the Kapalikas on a large scale and it is wrong to reduce the Siddhanta schools on that account to the level of the orgies.

The Kurma and Varaha puranas consider some of the Saiva schools such as Lakulisa and Kapalika as being outside the pale of Vedic (and Agamic) thought since they are held to follow delusive sastras (*moha sastras*).[3] The Kapalika comes for the greatest ridicule in Mahendra varman's *Mattavilasa prahasana* for his uncouth practices.

Vacaspati in *Bhamati* mentions four schools of Saivism – the Saiva, Pasupata, Karunika siddhantin and Kapalika and calls them Mahesvaras. All of them are said to hold that Siva is the

1. Vide Das Gupta, Volume V, chapter 1.

2. Frazer in his article on Saivism in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, quoted by Das Gupta.

3. S. N. Das Gupta, History of Indian Philosophy Voume V page 72.

instrumental cause (as the Saiva Siddhantins hold). The Saiva siddhanta though based on the agamas seems to have been an indigenous Tamilian system of philosophy as later complete development and elaboration in the Tamil language would indicate. It has to be clearly remembered here that neither Sankara nor Ramanuja or Vacaspati dared to notice the Tamilian Saiva Siddhanta cult, its religion and philosophy existing and flourishing all around them, for fear of losing their prestige and caste with the Sanskritists of their day. Sanskrit has a wider sway in the vast non-dravidian states of North India and these great men either did not care to know the great philosophy practised in the land of their birth or, knowing it, did not want to speak about it but by ignoring it connived at suppressing it. All the study and criticism of Saiva Siddhanta is only modern.

The Saiva siddhanta makes a fine distinction between pure Saiva Siddhanta and Saivism. Apparently, it places Saivism[1] at the level of the other sects like the Pasupata, Kapalika and Kalamukha and disowns it; Saiva Siddhanta does not mention the Pasupata and the other sects.

As distinguished from all these schools of Saivism, which are primitive in character and have no philosophic doctrines, Agama Saivism or what we call the Siddhanta school, is one which is based on a philosophy, the philosophy of universal love. "In the Saivagamas, there is a distinctive line of thought where Karuna or Grace is interpreted as a divine creative movement for supplying all souls with fields of experience in which they may enjoy pleasures or suffer from painful experiences. The souls, though governed by karma, have their own free volition out of which they are free to choose fields of experience good or bad. Even the abject sinner gets redeemed in time. That is the Glory of God's Grace. The Karuna of God reveals to us in just the same manner as we ought to experience it. Grace therefore is not a work of favour in a general sense, but it is a movement in favour of our getting the right desires in accordance with our karmas."[2]

1. Tamil *Tattuva-Prakasam* verses 241-242.

2. Das Gupta, Volume V, page 4.

2. SIDDHANTA AND THE PRATYABHIJNA

Pratyabhijna is recognition (or recall of identity or similarity) and that is what is otherwise known as the *Kashmir Saivism*. It has quite a substantial volume of Sanskrit philosophical treatises expounding it. It is also a non-dualist (*advaita*) school, having considerable agreement with Saiva Siddhanta in externals but difference in fundamentals. Both recognize *pati*, *pasu* and *pasa*. But for the *Pratyabhijna* school *Pati* is the sole reality. Siva is here both efficient eause as in the Siddhanta, but also the material cause, while *maya* is the material cause in the Siddhanta. Recognition of the soul as intelligent and all pervasive (though the term *pratyabhijna* is not used) has an important part in the scheme of salvation in Saiva Siddhanta. The parable of the king's son in the hunters' company is well known. Release is the realization of the true nature of the soul as distinct from all the bonds and matter and its perfect freedom as a total surrender and service to the Lord.

For the *Pratyabhijna* there is no separate cognizer and the cognized in the released state, but only essential intelligence where the cognizer merges. But in Saiva Siddhanta there is always a cognizer. The Siddhantin's point is that without an enjoyer, there is no enjoyment and nothing to be enjoyed. This cannot be answered by the *Ekatmavadin*. Siddhanta is also *advaita*, a non-dualism, not of substance but of essence. *Ekam eva advitiyam* in the upanishads does not mean that "there are not two" but means that "they are not two".

In both the schools final release comes only through *jnana*, enlightenment. Conduct, discipline, rituals etc. are but priliminaries to jnana. *Jnana* can accrue even in this birth as in the case of a *jivanmukta*. Here the two schools differ in the concepts of the status of the jivanmukta. The Pratyabhijna would say that whatever good or even bad the jivanmukta may do, he is not affected by merit or guilt, but remains stainless. But Meykandar, the author of the first treatise on Siddhanta, says that the jivanmukta having got rid of the defilement that prevents attainment of the feet of the Lord, consorts (should consort) with devotees and worships as Siva Himself the vestments of the devotees (meaning the sacred ash, rudraksha and the panchakshara) as well as the temples. Here we find a profound divergence.

3. THE SAKTA AGAMAS AND THE SAKTI CULT

The concept of Sakti is as old as the Vedas. The Krishna Yajur Veda mentions Her as the consort of Siva; in the Sata-Rudriya, it mentions Soma as one of the names of Rudra; Soma is Sa-Uma (with Uma), the aspect of Siva with His consort Uma, The Kena upanishad also mentions Uma. Sakti inseparable from Siva, is the symbol of Divine Grace. The Kena says that a Divine Effulgence lit up the sky but great powers like Agni and Vayu were unable to comprehend it. But when Indra went to see it, he saw before him, the lustrous Uma, daughter of the Himavan, and She told him that it was indeed the Supreme One, far above the celestial gods and angels. The point worth noting here is that Indra, because he had the good fortune to see Uma, was able to know that the Effulgence was the Supreme One, while the two others, Agni and Vayu, were unable even to know this, since they had no visitation from Uma. A further point is that Uma is conceived even then as the Haimavati the daughter of Himavan.

The concept of Uma, or Sakti as the active principle of Siva, had given rise to the separate Sakti cult from very early times. This seems to derive authority from the Sakta agamas which are said to be 77 in number. These are divided into three classes, the Subha (or Samaya), the Kaula and the Misra (or mixed) agamas. The *Subha* (i.e., auspicious) agamas are five and they take their names from the sages Vasishta, Sanaka, Suka, Sanandana and Sanatkumara. (It may be noted here that the four elderly sages who took their initiation under Siva as Dakshinamurti are also known as Sanaka, Sanatana, Sanandana and Sanatkumara. The origin of the modern Saiva Siddhanta philosophy is traced to Dakshinamurti through Sage Sanatkumara.)[1] These five agamas are said to teach the path of *samayachara*, i.e. ritualistic practices calculated to lead the votary to knowledge and ultimate liberation from bonds.

The second class of Agamas are the *Kaula* and they are 64 in number. The name is derived from *kula* (perineum) and they are devoted to the development of the occult powers arising out of the activising of Kundalini sakti. But these agamas are said to treat of a lower class of subjects dealing with questionable practices,

1. Some cults identify Sanatkumara with Skanda, one of the first preceptors in Saivism.

which are however considered efficacious in developing a lower order of occult powers, something like what is generally understood by the term witch-craft; alchemy and the like also come under these practices. This is the source for the development of the later Vamachara sect in the Sakta cult.

The third class *Misragama* consists of eight agamas. They are *Chandrakala, Jyothishvati, Kalanidhi, Kularnava, Kuleswari, Bhuvaneswari, Barhaspatya* and *Durvasamata.* The *Kularnava* is one of the more well known tantras. The subject of these agamas is a blend of the first and the second classes and hence the name misra.

All these agamas are known as *tantras* and *samhitas* also. All of them deal only with ritualistic practices; philosophy is not dealt with by them. The *Sakti sutras*, perhaps corresponding to the *Siva sutras* of the Kashmir system, quoted by the Sakti gloss writers, might have dealt with the Sakta philosophy, but the sutras are not available now.

Besides, the *Devimahatmyam* and some similar works in the Sanskrit language are deemed to be *Sakta* scriptures; but they are only pauranic (legends) in character. Ilango adihal, the author of the Tamil *Silappahikaram* has a song of 12 verses in praise of Kotravai (Sakti as Durga). She is here worshipped by members of the hill tribes as the Absolute One, the Supreme Wisdom. Her form as the slayer of Mahishasura is described in detail. Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra are said to worship her. She is described as the Consort of Siva, and all the attributes of Siva are applied to Her. This is a rare instance of Sakti worship in ancient Tamilnad, preserved in literature, the like of which we do not generally meet with in the later epochs. It may be said to be purely of the Sakta school.

The Sakti cult of the Tantras had given rise to two distinct schools known as the Vama marga and the Dakshina marga, the leftist and the rightist movements. The Vama marga was also known as the Bhoga marga, the path of enjoyment of worldly pleasures. Its practice of worship was also called *pancha makara*, madhu (wine) matsya (fish) mamsa (meat) mudrai (cereals) and maituna (copulation). This peculiar esoteric cult developed by the followers of this marga had perhaps as its basic tenet the worship of Sakti through satisfying the senses, in contrast to all the systems of worship which demanded a complete negation of such satisfac-

tion. *Yantras* (mystic diagrams) and *mantras* (mystic syllables) together with sacrifices had a large part to play in this type of worship. The Sakti worship was not the One Absolute, but there were many forms and the Yantras etc. also varied with the form worshipped. Initiation into these devices was by a guru and there always were secret rituals.

The more orthodox systems in the Hindu fold always looked down upon this marga; the emphasis here on secret rituals and the *pancha-makara* etc. brought this school into disrepute with the orthodox philosophical schools and gradually however, the system lost ground and except perhaps for Bengal, it died out altogether in the other parts of the sub-continent. This system never had any great following in the Tamilnad.[1]

Saint Tirumular (fifth century A.D.) mentions the Yamala (known as Rudra yamala) as the agama of Parasakti. He refers to this when speaking about the Nava (nine) agamas (Tirumantram verse 63). Later he refers to Sakti as she of the Yamala agama (1169). He devotes one whole section to Sakti worship, giving out large number of yantras and mantras therefor. The poems of war, called *Bharani* poems, have always a section in praise of Sakti. Some Siddhar, of the period 16-17th centuries, had been devotees of Sakti as Bala and have recorded some songs of deep mystic import. Besides there are a few fine poems in praise of Sakti. A solitary instance is the story of Abhirami Bhatta of the 18th century, who was suspected by his rivals for the Tanjavur ruler's favour to have indulged in vama practices, while in reality he had not. *Abhirami antadi* his songs on Sakti is famous.

The Dakshina marga on the other hand does not have secret rituals and does not resort to the *Pancha makara* practices. Along with the other systems, it follows the path of prayer and penance,

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1. Cults like the Mariamman worship, Pidari, Isakki, Kathayi, Renuka and similar types may probably be considered to resemble the lower aspects of a vanished Sakti cult. Through Kali has a place in a corridor (*prakara*) subtemple, Mari or Pidari never has a place anywhere within the Siva temple. These two, along with Aiyanar (the popular Ayyappan or Hariharaputra who is made much of in the second half of the 20th century through the influence of the Kerala Aiyappan cult, are placed at the outer corners of the living areas in all ancient townplanning for the villages in the past. Both Mari and Aiyanar are village tutelary deities; Mari has a baneful influence, while Aiyanar has a beneficial influence.

worship and meditation, although it also makes use of the yantras and the mantras.

Sakti is worshipped under different names in the different parts of India. So far as Tamilnad is concerned, Sakti is always Para-sakti the Supreme, the One that is always inseparable from Siva, His active principle. The forms of Kali and Durga, also worshipped in Tamilnad may be considered to be relics of the Independent Sakti cult, which perhaps had some vogue here in the remote past. Kali or Maha Chandi is the form of Ṣakti which dances with the Lord in the cremation ground at the time of the *Maha pralaya.* Durga is the destroyer of Mahishasura, Both Kali and Durga do not find a place in any inner shrine of a Siva temple. Very rarely do we see Kali in a Siva temple. But Durga has a definite place there. Her image is installed invariably in a central niche on the northern outer wall of a Siva shrine opposite to the place of Chandesa, in the first inner corridor. Kali is placed on an outer corridor (*prakara*).

The names Ambika, Uma and Parvati are universal, while Bhagawati is peculiar to Kerala, Chamundi to Mysore, Bhavani to Maharashtra, and Kali to Bengal. It is noteworthy that the capital city of Bengal takes its name from Kali; it was Kalika-ghat, the bathing place sacred to Kali, Kalighatha-Calcutta. The life of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa is well known as perhaps the greatest devotee of Sakti in recent times.

The Navaratri or Dasarah (nine or ten nights) festival in modern days preserves for us, throughout the whole of India, the Sakti cult. The first three days of this festival are sacred to the Sakti as Saraswati, the muse of learning, the second three days to Lakshmi, the goddess of plenty, and the last three to Sakti as Durga, the destroyer of Mahishasura or ignorance incarnate. In all the Siva temples, the image of Sakti is taken out in a procession and the symbolic slaying of Mahishasura is done on the evening of the last day. The tenth day is the Vijayadasami day, the day of Durga's victory over the asura. It is considered the most auspicious for admitting little children in the school and for starting the alphabets and for the commencement for any art or craft activity.

We find however that the higher philosophical aspects of the Sakti cult, excepting the practices of the Vama marga had been fully absorbed in the Saiva worship. In Siva puja, atmartha or

parartha, we find full Sakti worship also. Here she is the active principle of the Absolute. So also we find Saura puja, Ganapati puja, Kumara puja and Vishnu puja incorporated into Siva puja as its adjuncts. Except for Vaishnavism, which came to be established in the 12th century by Ramnuja, as a separate, distintive and elaborate cult, we find the other four sects of the Shanmata[1] group fully merged with Saivam.

4. THE VAISHNAVA AGAMAS

There are two schools in Vaishnavism, the *Vaikhanasa*, followers and descendants of Sage Vikhanasa, and the *Pancharatra* followers of the Pancharatragamas. The legend is that Lord Vishnu created Vikhanasa rishi so that he might propagate the Vishnu cult, because it was not very much in vogue. The sage had four disciples Atri, Bhrgu, Kasyapa and Marici and they re-wrote the Vaikhanasa agamas as *samhitas* in their names. Only some parts of these samhitas are now available. Their cult is that only *japa*, *homa*, *archana* (puja) and *yoga* can lead to Narayana. For them the *archa* form and *yoga* are most important. Vaikhanasam is summarised in the *Bodayana sutras*. They do not value the Tamil *alvar* songs but stick only to Sanskrit. They do not esteem other Vaishnava acharyas or maths. Only he *who is born* as a Vaikhanasa, or is a descendant of the original disciples is competent to perform Vishnu puja.

Ramanuja attempted to rid society of the rigidity of the Vaikhanasa school by conferring acharyahood on others and by emphasizing the greatness of the *Alvar prabandham*. The term *pancharatra* has seveıal connotations: (a) It relates to the five daily duties of the Vaishnava – *abhigamana*, *upadana*, *ijya*, *swadhyaya* and *yoga*. (b) Vishnu taught the agama to five rshis during five nights. (c) It relates to the five states of Vishnu –Vibhu, vibhava, vyuha, antaryami and archa.

During the days of Vedanta Desika (1269-1370) Vaishnavism separated itself into two sects–the *Tenkalai* and the *Vadakalai*. We need not go here into the distinctions that separate them.

The Pancharatra agamas (*samhitas*) are said to be 108.

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1. They are the Sauram, Ganapatyam, Kaumaram, Saktam, Vaishnavam and Saivam—see pages 131-134.

A reference to the Pancharatra Agamas gives some interesting information. In this branch of the Hindu religion, all agamas are generally known by the term *samhitas*. The term samhita is usually applied to a part of the Veda or a part of the Puranas. Very rarely is the term employed to denote an agama in Saivism: cf. the Paushkara samhita (agama); even here this usage is very late in point of time.

The first thing that strikes as is that these Vaishnava samhitas in general appear to have been written or compiled much later in point of time; perhaps a thousand and more years after Christ (i.e. long after Ramanuja 1017–1137). As the later Vaishnavas attached greater importance to the Sanskrit language, it was easy for them to write new treatises and call them a Samhita and invent stories about their antiquity. Samhita production seems to have been a pastime of the post-Ramanuja Vaishnava theologians. Very many of their samhitas lay themselves open to this charge. One Upendra samhita mentions Nathamuni (10th century), Alavandar (11th century) Ramanuja (12-13th century), and Vedanta Desikar (13-14th century). A *Vishnu tattva samhita* mentions Satakopa (9th century) and Ramanuja. Similar instances can be multiplied.

Again, these samhitas often treat of trivial subjects which do not come within the purview of the subject matter of the agamas as we know them. An instance is the *Kasyapa samhita* which treats of chanting the *Garuda-mantra* for curing snake poison; this does not of course detract from the philosophical value of the original agamas.

Some of them treat also of Saiva subjects. *Kaumara samhita* said to be a Pancharatra-agama, treats of Ganapati mantras; probably these are two diffeent manuals of the same name. Similarly *Isana-samhita. Paramagama Chudamani*, having 12,000 verses, deals with Sivaraatri and Sri Rama Navami alike; "The Lord does not approve of His devotees studying the Vaishnava sastras only".[1] The Brahma is here called Sadasivam and Narada is called Dakshinamurti.

Naradiya samhita has some good things and some queer things also to say. It emphasized the merits accuring through

1. Vide *Panorama* of *Pancharatra Literature* by H. Daniel Smith of the Syracuse University, Tamil translation, 1976.

worship in Siva temples; it also employs terms like the pasu and pasam which are acknowledged as Saiva philosophical terminology. But it is not so liberal when speaking about another sect among the worshippers of Vishnu. It says that although the offerings made by members of the Vaikanasa sect may be accepted, the temple should undergo a purification ceremony if a Vaikanasa happens to touch the image of the Lord.[1]

The *samhita* mentions the fish as one of the food offerings to the Lord in the temple.

The Vishnu cult has been made the most popular cult in the whole of north India except Kashmir where the Siva cult continues as in Tamilnad from the remote past to the present. A large number of saints had been born in every linguistic area there, after the powerful religious propaganda made by Ramanuja and they had all sung songs of deep devotion and total surrender to Vishnu. The aspect of Krishna had been the most popular. In Tamilnad also songs of supreme devotion had been sung on Vishnu from the 6th century and today the Vishnu *marga* (path way to God) is a parallel *marga* to the Siva *marga* here, having quite a large number of very fine temples, distinct forms of ritualistic worship and festivals, a vast literature in Tamil, devotional and philosophical, a distinct philosophy of its own, and quite a large following.

A word may be said here about the relative contribution of Vaishnavism and Saivism in the matter of fighting alien religions in the ancient period and in trying to establish the Vedic religion (what is today called Hinduism). A fact of history is that when Jainism held great sway in some parts of the country and had a grip over the minds of the people, it was militant Saivism that fought that religion because it did not owe allegiance to Siva, it did not acknowledge the Vedas, and it was athestic and also because it undermined the Tamil culture. Saivagama religion was the base that was the spring board of this fight where as Vaishnavism as such had absolutely no hand in the suppression of Jain influence. The stories of the Saiva saints Tiru Jananasambandhar and Tiru Navukkarasu bear witness to the struggles of the Saivas; no Alvar

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1. Tamil *Setu-purana* by Niramba aliahiya desikar (16th century) enjoins all devotees to worship both Siva and Vishnu. *Sivaneri prakasam*, a scriptural treatise written by Sivagra yogi, founder of Suryanarkoil mutt (16th century), specifies that an acharya should not only know the truths enunciated by the other religions but should also not speak ill of Brahma or Vishnu.

had any hand in it. When alien religions were suppressed by Saivism, the land was ripe and Vaishnavism built up its propaganda on the peace established by Saivism.

5. THE ADVAITA SCHOOL

Sankara the apostle of the Advaita school, born in Tamilnad, went north to preach his gospel of godliness; as there were great religions flourishing in South India in the form of the Saiva and the Vaishnava religions and as they had their own distinctive and advanced metaphysics and philosophical systems, he had practically no work in the Tamilnad, though he was born here. He established the doctrine of Absolute Monism, that the Ultimate Reality is only One without a second, a doctrine which is famous as the Advaita Doctrine. Under this doctrine there is no distinction as the worshipped and the worshipper: both are Brahman. However, in order to direct the imperfect human mind towards something tangible which it can grasp, instead of the abstract One which the mind cannot grasp, he is said to have composed the many devotional poems such as the *Soundarya Lahari*, the many *ashtakams* on Dakshinamurti, Viswanatha and Annapurna and Bhaja Goivindam song etc. He was born a brahmin and brahmins all over the land followed him. The *Smartha* brahmins of Tamilnad who were till this day Saiva Siddhantins and worshippers of Siva as the Absolute Reality, now adopted his philosophy and called themselves pure *Advaitins*. Since Sankara had sung both on Siva and on Vishnu, they also in time took to the worship of both, their philosophy being only the Sankara-advaita and no longer Saiva Siddhanta.

As Sankara had written all his treatises only in the Sanskrit language, these people also studied only the Sanskrit books and *never* studied *Tamil for philosophy*. Their accepted Sanskrit scriptures were the *Upanishads*, the *Gita* and the *Brahma sutras* (the three called Prasthana-traya)with the commentaries (*bhashya*) written for them by Sankara. However some gifted persons among the *Smartha* brahmins wrote fine religious and advaita philosophical books in the Tamil language later. Sri Bhattanar (13th century) and Tattuvarayar (15th century), to mention only two, were good writers of their day. Bhattanar had translated the *Bhagavat Gita* into Tamil verse under the orders of the Sankaracharya of his day and his writing is also very good poetry. Many fine glosses on the Tamil version were written in the 17th century. Tattuvaraya was a

giant of a writer of his day who had exhausted all types of writing Tamil verse and had produced a very large volume of popular and good poetry, all on the advaita philosophy. He does not distinguish between Saivism and Advaita monism but we might call his philosophy *Sivadaitic* monism, a monism where Brahman is substituted by Siva. There have been many more such writers.

But the pity of it all is that the smartha brahmins, who call themselves followers of Sankara and pure advaitins, would not touch the writings of Bhattanar or Tattuvarayar or similar Tamil advaita writing though written by brahmins but would swear only by the Sanskrit texts.

Most of the brahmins in Tamilnad had not studied Sanskrit at all but all their allegiance is only to the unknown and unlearnt Sanskrit which is totally Greek to them. So it happened that the enlightened among the lower levels of Hindu society in Tamilnad who were not admitted into the orthodox folds of Saivism adopted the advaita of Sankara. Not conversant with Sanskrit, they adopted naturally their own mother tongue as their language of religion and philosophy. So the writings of Bhattanar and Tattuvarayar and a host of such other advaitic writers like Sivajnana Vallalar, Mathai Tiruvenkata nathar, and Virai Alavandar are being ardently studied by them. Many commentaries have been written on their works by these followers and the writings are quite popular among them.

Tandavarayaswami (18th century) wrote a short metrical treatise on the essence of the pure advaita and called it *Kaivalya Navanitam* (the essence or butter of the *kaivalya*, pure state). It is a remarkable short classic on advaita, but not learned by the brahmin community; it is a great and popular scripture for the non-brahmin advaitins.

So this is the position of the advaita school in Tamilnad. The advaita school of course has no agamas nor does it study the Saivagamas. It may be remembered that where agama knowledge is necessary such as pratishtha and consecration work, they rope in the Sivacharyas and dismiss them when the work is over.

6. THE VIRA SAIVA SCHOOL

This school has a limited following in Tamilnad. Basava (1125–1165) who was a minister of the Karnataka ruler tried to

propagate a new cult in his land. Born a brahmin, he preached a new gospel of a casteless and classless society but the times were not ripe to receive his message and he died a frustrated man. But after him his message caught on and today the majority of the Karnataka people follow his new school which came to be called the Vira Saiva School; it is so called because it is said to follow the doctrines embedded in the *Viragama*, the fifteenth in the series of 28 Saivagamas. But this has not been printed and has not been quoted by any writer in the modern day; we are not sure if this is a mere legend. Vira Saiva simply means one who is a very strong and uncompromising Saiva.

The Vira Saiva cult seems to have entered Tamilnad only by the late 16th century when we find a fine poet named Revana Siddhar writing a treatise on Saiva Siddhanta. He named his book *Sivajnana dipam*, (the light of *Sivajnana*); it is in 174 long *viruttam* verses. Here he expounds well the Saiva Siddhantas philosophy and concludes by speaking of Vira Saivism in just four verses at the end. He speaks of two new features: one wearing the Sivalinga on one's own person, and two, *Ekalinga nishtha*, or devotion to a single linga. Vira saivism however had no identity in this period, the 16th century.

The 17th century witnesses the eruption of a large volume of theological and devotional writing in Tamilnad by eminent writers who were staunch Vira Saivas. A few mutts had been established in this period.

The Vira Saiva cult is ordinarily known as the *Lingayata* cult, because its followers always wear their *ishta-linga* in a string or chain round their neck. Their worship, food offering etc. are all to this linga; the contact of the linga with the physical body is believed to burn away all taints or impurities in the soul.

The chief tenets of the Vira Saiva cult can be summarized in the following words. *Ashtavarana* or the eight sheaths serve as the shields to protect the soul against the attack of *avidya;* they are the *guru, jangama* (devotees), *padodakam* (water washing the feet), *prasaada. vibhuti*, *rudraksha* and *mantra*. The *panchakchara* or five disciplines serve to unite the Vira saivas into one family. *Lingachara* is the wearing of the linga on one's person and offering worship to it three times a day. *Sadachara* is one's employment in some avocation and following therein in the path of *dharma.*

Sivachara is interdining and intermarriage without any caste distinction. *Prityachara* is the servility towards Siva and Sivabhaktas, *Kanachara* is the principle of establishing the *nyaya* doctrine. The third element is *linganga samarasya* and the *shadsthala* means therefor. The *sadhaka* can reach the state of release by going through the six mental states in order;they are devotion to the *bhakti sthala*, effort in the direction of the *Mahesa sthala*, knowledge in the *prasada sthala*, natural attachments in the *pranavalinga sthala*, action in the *sarana sthala* (surrender), and integration in the *aikya sthala*.

This is no intermediary priest here in the worship of Siva, because Siva linga is always worn on the person; and the wearer is enjoined to worship it a number of times daily; women also are entitled to this form of personal linga worship. The personal linga is attached to the new born infant or the 7th (or 10th day) and a *puja* thereof is instructed to the child in his 7th year. Birth as a Vira saiva is held to be the last birth; he directly attains *moksha* and there are no more births for him; on death he is not said to have died but said to have become one with the lingas. Daily bath and daily worship of the lingas worn, twice are most import. There is no impurity through any type of pollution. Women have equal right to wear the personal linga. No meat and no liquor. Sivaratri is the most important festival. There are generally no *vratas* or penances.

7. THE PANCHAYATANA PUJA

During the past few years, there has been a considerable talk of *Panchayatana puja* and many are learning about it as though it is something new, some thing like the new Aiyappan cult and some thing that could prove an integrating factor which could bring together the Saivas and the Vaishnavas. At the outset, let us remember that it is not anything new or outlandish like the Aiyappan cult, but is only an orthodox system of worship or puja sanctioned by the *smritis* or *dharma sastras*; it has been a form of worship for the *smarthas* (followers of the *smritis*) and it had never applied to the Saivas or the Vaishanvas.

The different *upanishads* of a later day emphasize the puja of each deity held by it to be supreme. Fo example, the *Kaivalyopanishat* says:

Uma sahayam Paramesvaram Prabhum
Trilochanam Nilakantham prasantam

Dyatva munir gachati bhuta yonim
samasta sakshim tamasa parastat.

The worshipper of Paramesvara, by his meditation, attains true knowledge and bliss. Similarly the *Ganapatyopanishat*, *Devi-upashat, Suryopanishat* and *Narayanopanishat* glorify the *puja* and *upsana* of the *individual* deities as the means for attaining supreme knowledge and the state of bliss.

All these pujas are in a sense *vaidika* or even *tantric,* enjoined by the *smritis* and *puranas,* but are *not agamic* or Saiva in character. Later in time, the concepts of a combined puja for the five seems to have been evolved by the *Puranakaras* and it has been labelled the *Pa ıchayata ıa puja.*

Ayatanam means a place or an abode. Hence *Panchayatana* means the places where the *five* deities abide or are invoked and worshipped.

The Upanishads do not mention the *pancha devatas* at all. Nor do the Agamas mention the worship of those five deities. The individual worship of the deities has been there from very early times but it is only the *smritis* that lay down that the five could be worshipped at the same time and at the same place. The *smriti sara* says:

Adityam Ambikam Vishnum
Gananatham Mahesvaram
Pancha yajna paro nityam
Grhastah pancha pujayet.

The householder should perform the pujas of the five daily; they are Aditya (the Sun), Ambika (Sakti), Vishnu, Gananatha (Ganapati) and Mahesvara (Siva). The *Devi Bhagavatam* in its nineth *skanda* deals with the Panchayatana puja. It narrates here the story of Savitri and Satyavan. Savitri in the course of her entreaty with Yama, asks him the means for escaping the horrors of hell. He tells her that the worshippers of the Pancha devas will not see hell even in their dreams. He enumerates the various virtues accruing from the puja; "It destroys births and deaths, old age, disease and sorrow. It is of the form of all good and is the cause of supreme bliss and of the attainment of all *siddhis.* It saves one from hell. It causes the sprouting of the tree of *bhakti.* It destroys the tree of *karma.* It confers the indestructible state

of happiness. It protects one even from the messengers of Yama." He concludes:

Na cha pasyanti svapnepi
Pancha devarchaka narah.

But there seems to be no uniformity in the concept of who the Pancha devas are and in what order they are to be worshipped. The *Lokakshi smriti* lays down: Mahesvara shall be placed in the centre, and the others as the *parivara* deities: Aditya (Surya, Sun) in the east, Ambika (Sakti) in the south, Vishnu in the west and Gananatha (Ganapati) in the north. This is the puja of Siva, with the four as the sub-deities. Here it is clear that the five deties are Siva with the sun, Sakti, Vishnu and Ganapati as the *parivaras*.

This is *Siva-panchayatana*. Each panchayatana is known by the name of the central deity such as Siva, Vishnu, Ambikai, Ganapati or Skanda.

The *Padma purana* lays down that Aditya shall be placed in the centre with Gananatha, Devi, Rudra and Narayana in the *parivara* positions. Other books speak differently. Where one worships Vishnu as the main deity it is *Vishnu panchayatana;* the *parivara devatas* will be Siva, Ganapati, Surya and Sakti. The Ambika parivara devatas will be Siva, Ganapati, Surya and Vishnu; and so on for the others. Books say that the *parivara* devatas shall be not in the primary four directions but in the four corners beginning from the north east (*Isana*) – south east, south west and north west. The vaidika puja is said to be *samashti*, the combined puja; the books allow the *viyashti*, individual puja, for the followers of the tantric systems.

The aims of the five pujas are also discussed in the books. *Ganesa* is worshipped for removal of all difficulties and obstaclsè. Surya is worshipped for conferment of good health. Agni is worshipped for *suddhi.* purification. (Here Agni is intended to signify *Skanda*, the *Agni garbha.*) Vishnu is worshipped for the conferment of riches. *Siva* is worshipped for *jnana* (since he is the Jnanesa). *Sivai* (Sakti is worshipped for the attainment of *mukti*. Here we see a sixth concept it the form of Skanda introduced. This is an allowance for the concept of the *shanmata* adopted later by the vaidikas. The shanmatas are the sects in the

bhakti marga. They are Sauram, Ganapatyam, Kaumaram, Vaishnavam, Saktam and Saivam:

Saivam cha Vaishnavam Saktam
Sauram Vainayakam tatha,
Skandam cha bhakti margasya
Darsanani shadeva hi.

(Vinayakam-Ganapatyam; Skandam-Kaumaram).

A few more details of the Panchayatana puja may be relevant here. This puja by implication is only *atmartha* puja; it has of course no place in *parartha*. It may be done in the morning or at noon It may be done on images, *pictures* or *yantras*. No daily bath (*abhisheka*) in the puja is necessary but the images and the *yantras* may be given a bath during the *parvakalas*-or special occasions (such as the first day of the month, the worshipper's natal star, *dvadasi*, *purnima* and *amavasya*.) Puja should done in the morning in the whole month of *Marhali* (December-Januay); to this puja accrues the merit of the puja for one thousand years.

Panchamirtha bath is prescribed as being efficacious in conferring *moksha*. *Panchamirtha* consists of milk, curds, ghee, honey and sugar (of course brown country sugar). During the bath the mantras, *Isanas Sarvavidyanam*, *Tatpurusha, Aghora, Vamadeva* and *Sadyojata* are uttered. The usual sixteen upacharas are offered. (They are *avahana*, *asana*, *padya*, *arghya*, *achamana*, *madhuparkka*, *snana*, *vastra*, *upavita*, *gandha*, *pushpa*, *dhupa*, *dipa*, *nivedana*, *karpura* and *pradakshina namaskara*). For *archana* fragrant flowers are preferred. Some flowers are not to be used for some deities-*Vilva* for Surya, *tulasi* (basil) for Ganapati, *aruhu* (hariali grass) for Sakti, *datura* for Vishnu and *tazhai* (serew pine) for Siva are taboo. *Vilva* for Siva and *tulasi* for Vishnu may be used for many days. Mantras are prescribed for gathering the flowers. There is a fine meaningful mantra for vilva the favourite flower leaf petal of Siva. It is a salutation to the Vilva Tree and prays for forgiveness from the tree for taking its leaves; "Salutations to thee, O Vilva tree? Thou art the cause for the attainment of the requisite benefits from the puja. Though art the Giver of the four states (*saloka*, *samipa*, *sarupa* and *sayujya*). Thou art the form of the Three Murtis (Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra). I am gathering thy leaves for the archana of the Supreme Sambhu who is the physician for removal of the poison of samsara. Kindly forgive me."

This is indeed a very fine and poignant sentiment in all Hinduism reflecting the consideration even for the vegetable kingdom as the creation of God.

A parallel instance of homage to the Earth as the Bhudevi may be remembered here:

Samudra vasane devi
Parvata sthana mandale
Vishnu patni namas tubhyam
Padasparsam kshamasva me.

The oceans are Thy garment and hills are Thy breasts: O Vishnu Patni, salutations to Thee. Please forgive me for touching Thee with my feet (since I cannot do otherwise).

Dupa (incense) with fragrent materials is to be offered to the feet. Dipa had better be of cow's ghee. It may have one, three or five wicks on as many faces; it is offered to the face. *Dhupa-dipa* absolve one of the fear of Yama (death). White rice (*suddhannam*) offered should be of the quantity equivalent to a man's single meal. *Tambulam* (betels), *karpuram* (camphor), and *namaskaram* (prostration) follow. The conept of the worshipper should be that the mantra and the guru are Siva. The *pujaka* is governed by five disciplines: the wearing of the sacred ash and the *rudraksha* beads, *panchakshara* japa, *abhisheka* with the *Rudra mantra*, *archana* with the *vilva patra* and *pradakshina namaskara*.

Such is the panchayatana puja and the disciplines attached to it. Naturally as is evident from what has been said here, it is mostly directed to Siva and follows the entire Saiva disciplines regarding puja. But yet it is not for the Saiva (and not for the Vaishnava also). It is for the *smartha* who is expected to hold fast to the doctrine of *aham-brahmasmi*. To save him from the state of a mental negation of worship, this has been prescribed incorporating all the different deities in the worship. As stated already this is personal and is not a temple ritual. So far as the Saiva is concerned, *atmartha* and *parartha* are almost identical and what finds no place in the temple finds no place in his *atmartha puja* also.

Some Saivas (not Vaishnavas) seem fondly to imagine that it is a great way towards an integration of all pujas, particularly

the Saiva and the Vaishnava and that it is a panacea for so many evils seen today. Whatever may be said in justification of the puja, we can only say it has no sanction in the agamas.

The Panchayatana puja is the puja of the five murtis-Ganapati Surya, Sakti, Siva and Vishnu. Presumbly these five here can be' invoked and worshipped in a manner the devotee pleases, since it has no mention in the agamas and no rules are prescribed for any of its rituals. Some of the agamic procedure is followed here but it is all mostly pragmatic and not compulsory or mandatory. In order to clothe it in a semblance of scriptural sanction, it is called a *vaidika puja*. into which the *sadaka* is to be initiated by a guru. But this is quite a contradiction in terms, since no such puja or for the matter of that no puja (apart from *agnikarya* and sacrifices) is prescribed in the Vedas Later in the evolution of society the brahmin community had written up a set of rules called *puja vidhana*, being rules taken from the Saiva agamas and *paddhatis* along with their own empirical practices and called them *vaidika* puja. The Vedas do not mention the puja of these deities and so the name is a misnomer. There is no guru to teach the panchayatana puja to any one; in practice any one may begin the puja by himself because there is no *diksha kriya* involved and no question of competency or conferment of competency.

On the other hand, if we examine *agamic* Siva puja, *atmartha*, we shall find there the integration of a set of six pujas. One, the commencement with Surya, the puja of the Sun God, the perceived source of power on earth, power as light and heat which make possible all life. This puja is *Saura puja* (*Saura* relating to Surya), and is done as described already at the south eastern corner of the puja spot. The second and the third are the Ganapati puja and the Skanda puja, performed at the north western corner and the north eastern corners respectively of the puja spot. Next to Skanda towards the west, in a line is done a short puja for Brahma and Vishnu. Of these, Vishnu constitutes a Vishnu puja for him who is held to be a *parivara murti* to Siva. Next is of course the great Siva puja, for which all the others are mere adjuncts. After Siva puja there is the puja for Sakti as Ambikai, to the north east of the Sivalinga. Lastly there is the Chandesa puja for Saint Chandesvara raised to the position of a head of Siva's forces. This is to the north east of the Siva linga. This completes the six pujas –

Surya, Ganapati, Skanda, Siva, Sakti and Chandesa. This is one complete course of an integrated Siva puja.

What are called the Shan-matas are the six systems of religions - worship of Surya, Ganapati, Skanda (Kumara), Siva, Sakti and Vishnu. These are integrated into the system of Saiva Kriya puja as detailed above. Vishnu as already shown is worshipped in a particular place under the concept of the *Pancha gurumar*, namely the five gurus of the worshipper-Ganapati, Skanda, Sakti, Siva and Vishnu. It may thus be realized that the very agamic worship is itself an integration of all the different schools of the orthodox or the *vaidika* religions.

Certain stones are considered specially valuable in the worship of the *murtis* in the *Panchayatana puja*. A stone known as *sonabhadra* stone is considered the favourite of Ganesa. This stone is available in the River Sona (Sone) in Bihar; Sone is a large tributory of the Ganga. It is called *Sonai* in *Purananuru* (13). *Spatika* is prescribed for the worship of Surya because of its whiteness. It is available in the rocks at Vallam near Tanjavur. *Banalingam* on which Siva is to be worshipped is available from the River Narmada. A rock in which a strain of *svarna* (gold) runs called the *svarna mukhi sila* is said to be found in the Svarna mukhi river, famous by the story of Kannappar at Kalahasti in the modern Andra Pradesh. The *Saligramam*, a fossil on which the worship of Vishnu is most meritorious is found in the river Kantaki in Nepal and also in the Narmada.

The protoganists of the Panchayatana puja claim this puja causes an integration in the national concept by prescribing an integrated worship of the five materials obtainable in such distant places within this sub-continent, from the heart of Tamil nadu to Nepal.

The Siva puja is called Sauradi-Chandantam - from Surya to Chandesa. It is a sixfold puja as already stated for Surya, Ganapati, Skanda (as Saravana bhava guru), Siva, Sakti and Chandesa.

Panchayatana has nothing to do with Pancha Murti. In all temples on the occasion of the *brahmotsava* festival and on other similar celebrations, there is a procession of deities called *Pancha murti purappadu* (procession of Pancha murtis). The five murtis are Ganapati, Skanda with consorts, Siva generally in the form of

Somaskanda, Sakti and Chandesa. Chandesa is an integral part of the Siva temple worship and festivals.

All these go to show that Panchayatana puja is a personal form of worship, not related to the temple and that the Panchayatana is only for the *smarthas* and *not for the Saivas* and it is a later accretion in Hindu theism.

It is however remarkable that we find a new Devi Panchayatana temple in the city of Banaras, constructed under the orders of the Senior Sankaracharya of Kanchi. The patron deity of their *pitha* is Kamakoti (a form of Sakti). Hence here we have a central temple of Kamakoti facing west; at the four corners we have Siva, Ganesa, Surya and Vishnu. Those at the west, i.e. in front of the central shrine are facing east, facing the central deity, while the others at the two other corners are facing west, towards the centre. All the outer shrines are at the four corners. In between the two shrines at the back of the main central shrine, they have installed a Ranganatha, (a form of Vishnu) who is reclining on His usual serpent couch. From all these features, it can be seen that the concept of Panchayatana is itself purely eclectic. Naturally it can have no scriptural sanction. A large number of Tamilnad people, women more than men, were in attendance during the puja at about 8. p.m. People of the north were few.

The concept of this temple can easily be seen to be purely a modern innovation.

8. THE SHAN - MATAS AND SHAD - DARSANAS

It may be appropriate to give here a short note on the concept of the six *darsanas* and the six *matas*. The *Darsanas* are schools of philosophy which have been existing in India from the very ancient past. They are schools which accept the authority of the Vedas and are mentioned together with the names of the Sages who first enunciated them. They are the *Nyaya* of *Gautama, Vaiseshika* of *Kanata, Samkhya* of *Kapila, Yoga* of *Patanjali, Purvamimamsa* of *Jaimini* and *Uttara mimamsa* of *Badarayana.* These are also known as the *Astika darsanas.* These are distinct from the *Nastika schools* which deny the authority of the Vedas; these are the *Ajivaka* and *Nirghanta* (grouped together generally as *Jainism*), *Lokayata* and *Charvaka* (grouped together as Atheism) and Southranthikam, Yogacharam, Madhyamikam nda Vaibhashikam (group-

ed together as Buddhism). Nyaya philosophy is mostly as chool of logic. The nyaya darsana holds that *prakrti* is insentient, *achit*, and so a *chit* is to be admitted for creating it; this creator is God. Because of this argument or *nyaya*, it is called the *Tarkkika darsana*. *Vaiseshika* is allied to this; it explains how the seen world has been created. The *Samkhya* is the logical basis for all schools and even *matas* of the later period. According to this, the self is *chit*; it is deluded by *prakriti*, the prime cause for the seen world and imagines that it is itself the cause of everything; *kaivalya* is the state where this delusion is removed and this is *Samkhya*. The *Yoga* school prescribes the yoga system as the *sadhana* for the attainment of this state.

Purva mimamsa is the path of the first three parts of the Veda- the *mantra*, *brahmana* and the *aranyaka*. It is the *kriya marga* as laid down in these parts and it is also known as *karma mimamsa*. Here *Uttara mimamsa* (*mimamsa*-investigation) is the real philosphy school. The final goal of investigation is the Brahman. The search for a knowledge of Brahman is philosophy. This derives from the upanishad part of the Vedas. As this is the end part of the *Veda* (*anta*), it is also called *Vedanta*. Since it is a quest for the Brahman, it is also known as the Brahma-mimamsa.

All these are philosophies, quests for the knowledge of the Ultimate. But the *shan-matas* are religion, the six schools of religion – the *Saura*, *Ganapatya*, *Kaumara*, *Vaishnava*, *Sakta* and *Saiva*. These have been existing in the Tamilnad from the beginning of recorded history while the *Shad-Darsanas* go back to a period probaly earlier than recorded history.

Sauram is the worship of Surya, the Sun god as the manifest form of the Supreme Being, Siva in the Saivagamas. *Silappadhi-karam* also offers worship to the Sun. The sun worship is the first kriya in the Siva puja according to the Saivagamas. There is no separate Soura cult in Tamilnad, The Suryanarkoil temple in Tanjavur District and the Konarak temple of Orissa are dedicated specially to the Sun.

Ganapatyam is the worship of Ganapati (Vinayaka) as the Supreme Being. The elephant-faced Ganapati is considered by the puranas as the first son of Siva-Parvati and he receives a worship every where in any ritual. He is the head of the Siva *ganas* (Siva's forces) and hence the name. He is given a place in *Atmartha Siva puja*, but as an independent school of religion it

had never existed in Tamilnad. Some upanishads deal with Ganapati.

Kaumaram is the worship of Kumara (Subrahmanya) said by the puranas to be the second son of Siva-Parvati, and to be Devasenapati. Kumara as Muruha is celebrated in all classical literature; he is the patron deity of *kurinji* (hill regions) usually the first of the five physio-graphical regions. Separate temples and worship for him abound in Tamilnad. In the north of India he is known as Karttikeya. Separate agamas like the Kumara tantra exist for him. Although all devotional literature speaks of him as the Supreme, the Kaumara mata does not appear to have existed as a distinct cult in the land; it has fully been merged with the Siva cult.

Vaishnavam is the worship of Vishnu as the Supreme Being and this mata has been existing in the Tamilnad from the beginning as a parallel to Saivism. Vishnu is the Lord of the forest regions and separate temples and modes of worship, besides philosophies have been developed for him and today in Tamilnad it is as distinct and independent a religion as Saivism, with a vast philosophical and devotional literature. It originated from Saivism. But, for the Saivas, worship of Vishnu is also included in their Atmartha Siva puja. There are of course many Vaishnava upanishads.

Saktam is the worship of Sakti as the Supreme Being and in this respect it is the religion of Bengal. But in Tamilnad, Sakti, is the Consort or the inseperable Energy aspect of Siva and Her worship is fully merged in Siva worship. She comes down in literary history as the patron deity for the arid desert region, in the name of Kotravai. A few separate temples for Sakti exist today in Tamilnad and there is a vast body of devotional literature in her honour. There are also many Sakta *Upanishads* and Sakta *Tantras;* but Saktaism had been fully absorbed in Saivism, where worship of Sakti had become an integral part of Saivism and today there is no separate cult here as the Sakta cult.

Saivism as a religion has been here from the days of the Vedas and even earlier with a very rich heritage of philosophy and treatises like the Agamas and the Upanishads and similar philosophical treatises, temples and temple worship. The devotional literature on Saivism is very vast. The entire body of the Tamil people in India and overseas are followers of Siva excepting a sizeable portion of Vishnu worshippers. Saiva worship has gathered unto itself all

other sects like Sauram, Ganapatyam, Kaumaram and Saktam and includes Vaishnavam also.

So this is the *Shan-Mata* and *Shad-Darsana* picture. While *Darsana* is philosophy, an exercise for the intellect, *Mata* is the religion calling forth a devotion, dedication and surrender to the chosen god.

Sankara followers fondly call him the founder - *Sthapanacharya*- of the Shanmatas. This is not correct. He directed his followers to follow one of the six paths and this does not make him the founder thereof. Probably he had a natural misgiving that his followers might stop with "aham brahmasmi" and might not have any *upasana* or religious code to regulate their conduct through life. Hence he seems to have pointed out to them this worship or rather the need to follow and observe some *upasana* without which life would be like a rudderless vessel on the stormy sea of life. These matas were already existing before him in the Tamil country. He has the credit of directing his bramin followers along these pathways to God; this does not make him the originator or founder of the matas.

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A NOTE ON AGAMA AND ARCHANAS

Much has been written in newspapers and spoken on platforms in 1982 on this subject but unfortunately all that has been done without an actual reference to what is prescribed in the Agamas and without an actual understanding of what an *archana* is. As there is a lot of confusion in popular understanding in the matter, we shall try to explain the subject here briefly.

Puja as laid down in the agamas is of two categories-*atmartha puja* and *parartha puja*. Atmartha puja is to be performed in the home etc. (not in the temple) by any individual under proper *diksha* or initiation, for the welfare of himself and his family, or for *moksha*, final liberation, in the manner instructed by a competent guru, to a Siva linga, with a minimum of accessories such as flowers, sandal, lamp, incense, food offering etc.

Parartha puja according to the agamas is the puja in the temple performed (to the Siva linga installed there) by the competent person at specified hours in the day, with a larger number of accessories, for the benefit of the community. Parartha puja can be done only by the competent Sivacharya in the temple while atmartha puja can be done by any one initiated in this behalf not in the temple but in his home. In the agama language, *archana* means *puja*.

Now in popular lore today in Tamil nadu, *archana* has come to mean the dropping of a flower or of *kumkum* (for a Sakti deity) at the feet of the deity to the accompaniment of the utterance of a name of the deity. The names are in several groups such as 108 (*ashtottara*) 300 (*trisati*) and 1000 (*sahasranama*). The utterance of each name is preceded by the *pranava OM* and is succeeded by the term *nama*, which means 'I salute the deity (having this name)'. This utterance is always done after the temple puja is completed and after the priest had offered the *mantra pushpa* at the feet of the deity. This kind of utterance of the name (in the form of eg. *OM Sri Matre namah* (I salute the Mother Sri Matru i.e., Sakti as Lalita) is no where mentioned or prescribed in any agama. This form of worship is born out of the desire of the worshipper to please the deity by his homage to the deity in its various names. The priest is agreeable to this type of worship and this is done in the name of *archana;* but this is *not archana* at all (because archana is puja beginning from *Avahana* and

ending with *Visarjana* and having in the process the 16 *upacharas*). These so-called archanas are all *puranic* in character and *not agamic*. Some of them found in puranas have become prominent because of the importance of the commentaries written on them by eminent authorities. Chief among these prayers or *sahasra namas* (1000 names) are three:

1. *Vishnu sahasranama* found in the Vishnu purana, commentary by Sankara.

2. *Ganapati sahasranama* found in the Ganesa purana, commentary by Bhaskararaya; and

3. *Lalita sahasranama*, on Sakti as Lalita the destroyer of Bandasura, legend and sahasranama found in the Brahmanda purana, commentary by the same Bhaskararaya.

Hence we call these puranic and we call them not agamic and not puja. They are mere prayers. And prayers to the Lord Siva in the temple may be said or offered in any language according to the Agamas. The agamas *no where say* that prayer (which in fact the sahasranamas are) can be said only in the Sanskrit language—vide *Kamikagama, Purva bhaga,* chapter 4, *Archana vidhi patala,* slokas 438-9:

> Urdhvam dravida bhashangam ganam nrutta yutam tu va
> samskritanapabhramsam nanasvara samanvittam
> yadashtadasa bhashoktam ganam va parikalpayet.

"Then let the prayers of the *Dravida* (*Tamil*) *bhasha* be sung, along with dance recital; and let there be singing in Sanskrit, wtih all svaras and without wrong pronunciation; and then let the prayers in all the 18 languages also be offered".

This does not require any explanation. Tamil prayers (i.e., name-offerings) must be offered and if in Sanskrit, we should be careful about *svaras*; wrong pronunciation of the words should be guarded against. Not only these, but prayers in all the Indian languages may be offered. This settles the question. The agama lays down that prayers should be offered in the local languages. If we know that the sahasranama archana and the like are not puja but are only prayers, there can be no objection to reciting them in the Siva temples etc. in the deities presence in the local language.

Now we believe two points have been made clear in erespect th of Sahasranama archana and the like in Tamil nadu:

1. This sahasranama etc. archanas are not mentioned in the agamas at all and they are all only a sort of prayer.
2. They can be done, according to the agamas, in the mother tongue and in the other local languages.

A NOTE ON MATANGAGAMA

(Kriya, Yoga and Charya Padas)

A detailed note on Matangagama Vidyapada will be found on page 77. Since printing the above the French Institute of Indology, Pondichery, have published the other three padas of this agama in a handsome volume. This contains as usual an elaborate introduction in French and Sanskrit, the Text with the commentary of Bhatta Ramakantha and copious notes, an index and a number of illustrations of *mudras* and *kundas*. An English summary in 13 pages is a welcome addition here.

The *Kriya pada* is in 15 chapters and 989 slokas and deals with diksha, snana, archana, agnikarya, dreams, the linga and the images. The *Yoga pada* has 7 chapters in 452 slokas dealing with yoga in general, getting over the tattvas and the breath. The *Charya pada* has 10 chapters in 482 slokas dealing with different personal disciplines, purification, taking alms etc. In all, here we have a text of 1923 slokas. This publication makes this the third Mulagama which is available in full, i.e., with the four parts, the other two being *Suprabheda* and *Kirana* (and also the upagama *Mrgendra*).

KAMIKAGAMA KRIYAPADA

As the Printing of this page is completed, we learn the Archakar Association has released the Uttara bhaga of the Kamikagama, Kriyaqada in the nagari script.

THE ORIGINAL TAMIL TEXTS FOR THE MATERIAL QUOTED IN THE BOOK

Page 3 Note :4 தொல்காப்பியம் பொருளதிகாரம், சூத்திரம் 652: மொழி பெயர்த்து யாத்தல்: வேதப் பொருண்மையும் ஆகமப் பொருண்மையும் நியாயப்பொருண்மையும் கூறினார்.

Page 5. St. Appar Devaram :

தந்திரம் அறியாத் தக்கன் வேள்வியைத் தகர்த்த ஞான்று
சந்திரற்கு அருள் செய்தாரும் சாய்க்காடு மேவினரே (4.65.5).
தந்திரம் — ஆகமம்.

Page 6. Note 1 : Tirumantram verses :

பெற்ற நல் ஆகமம் காரணம் காமிகம்
உற்ற நல் வீரம் உயர் சிந்தம் வாதுளம்
மற்றவ் வியாமளம் ஆகும் கா லோத்தரம்
துற்றநற் சுப்பிரம் சொல்லும் மகுடமே. 63

நந்தி இணையடி நான்தலை மேற் கொண்டு
புந்தியின் உள்ளே புகப்பெய்து போற்றி செய்து
அந்தி மதிபுனை அரனடி நாள்தொறும்
சிந்தைசெய் தாகமம் செப்பலுற் றேனே. 73

செப்பும் சிவாகமம் என்னும் அப் பேர் பெற்றும்
அப்படி நல்கும் அருள்நந்தி தாள் பெற்றுத்
தப்பிலா மன்றில் தனிக் கூத்துக் கண்ட பின்
ஒப்பில் எழுகோடி யுகம் இருந் தேனே. 74

பின்னை நின் றென்னே பிறவி பெறுவது
முன்னை நன்றாக முயல் தவம் செய்கிலர்
என்னை நன்றாக இறைவன் படைத்தனன்
தன்னை நன்றாகத் தமிழ்ச் செய்யு மாறே. 81

Page 8. Note 3 : Tiru Malsisai Alvar :

சாக்கியங் கற்றோம், சமண் கற்றோம், சங்கரனார்
ஆக்கிய ஆகம நூல் ஆராய்ந்தோம்; — பாக்கியத்தால்
செங்கட் கரியானைச் சேர்ந்துயாம் தீதிலோம்:
எங்கட் கரிய தொன் றில்.

Page 10. Tirukkural, Perimelahar :

கோளிற் பொறியிற் குணமிலவே எண்குணத்தான்
தாளை வணங்காத் தலை.

''எண் குணங்களாவன : தன் வயத்தனாதல், தூய உடம்பினனாதல், இயற்கை உணர்வினனாதல், முற்று முணர்தல், இயல்பாகவே பாசங்களின் நீங்குதல், பேரருளுடைமை, முடிவிலாற்றலுடைமை, வரம்பிலின்பமுடைமை என இவை. இவ்வாறு சைவாகமத்தும் கூறப்பட்டது. அணிமாவை முதலாக உடையன. எனவும் கடையிலா அறிவை முதலாக உடையன எனவும் உரைப்பாருளர்'' — பரிமேலழகர் உரை. (அணிமாவை முதலாக உடையன, அட்டமா சித்திகள்; கடையிலா அறிவை முதலாக உடையன, சைனர் உரைக்கும் எண் குணங்கள்.)

Paripadal, Parimelalahar Urai: Verse 11, lines 77–88:

ஆதிரை, விரிநூல் அந்தணர் வேள்வி தொடங்க — ஆகமங்களை யுணர்ந்த பூசகர் அத்திருவாதிரைக்குத் தெய்வமாகிய இறைவனுக்கு விழாவைத் தொடங்க — பரிமேலழகர் உரை.

Paripadal, Verse 3, line 48:

''நினக்கு விரிந்தகன்ற கேள்வி அனைத்திலும் — விரிந்து அகன்ற ஆகமங்கள் அனைத்தானும் அகங்காரத்தாலும் மனத்தாலும் உணர்வினுனும் மற்றும் எல்லாவற்றானும் நினக்கு வனப்பும் எல்லையும் அறியப்படாத மரபினோய்'' — பரிமேலழகர் உரை.

Page 11. Tirumular: The Tamil verses are given against page 6, note 1. **Page 16.** Note 1 : Abhirami antadi :

கமலாலயனும் மதியுறுவேணி மகிழ்நனும் மாலும் வணங்கி என்றும் துதியுறு சேவடியாய் 7; அசுரர் தங்கள், முரண் அன்றழிய முனிந்த பெம்மானும் முகுந்தனுமே, சரணம் சரணம் என நின்ற நாயகி 61; நயனங்கள் மூன்றுடை நாதனும் வேதமும் நாராணனும் அயனும் பரவும் அபிராம வல்லி 74.

The concept of the Sakti as the Supreme Power is found even in the epic of the early period, Silappadhikaram. Chapter 12, Vettuvavari :

அரி அரன் பூமேலோன் அக மலர் மேல் மன்னும்
விரிகதிர் அம் சோதி விளக்காகியே நிற்பாய்.

Page 17. Note 1 : St. Appar Devaram 6, 54, 8:

பேராயிரம் பரவி வானோர் ஏத்தும்
பெம்மானைப் பிரிவிலா அடியார்க் கென்றும்
வாராத செல்வம் வருவிப் பானை
மந்திரமும் தந்திரமும் மருந்து மாகித்
தீரா நோய் தீர்த்தருள வல்லான் தன்னைத்
திரி புரங்கள் தீயெழத் திண் சிலை கைக் கொண்ட
போரானைப் புள்ளிருக்கு வேளூ ரானைப்
போற்றாதே ஆற்ற நாள் போக்கி னேனே.

Do. Sambandhar Devaram 3.25.1 (and many others) :

மருந்து வேண் டில்லிவை மந்திரங் கள்ளிவை
புரிந்துகேட் கப்படும் புண்ணியங் கள்ளிவை
திருந்துதே வன்குடித் தேவர் தே வெய்திய
அருந்துவத் தோர்தொழும் அமரர்வே டங்களே.

Note 2 : Here he emphasizes that medicine and mantras are also the forms taken by Siva.

Page 17.

பஞ்சிதன் சொல்லாப் பனுவல் இழையாக
செஞ்சொற் புலவனே சேயிழையா — எஞ்சாத
கையே வாய் ஆகக் கதிரே மதியாக
மையிலா நூல் முடியு மாறு. —நன்னூல்.

Page 19. In praise of Sivajnanabodham :

வேதம் பசு, அதன் பால் மெய்யா கமம், நால்வர்
ஓதும் தமிழ் அதனின் உள்ளுறு நெய், — போதமிகு
நெய்யின் உறுசுவையாம் நீள் வெண்ணெய் மெய் கண்டான்
செய்த தமிழ் நூலின் திறம். — தனிப்பாடல்.

Page 21. Arulnandisivam, Sivajnanasiddhiyar, 267 :

வேத நூல் சைவநூல் என்றிரண்டே நூல்கள்;
வேறுரைக்கும் நூல் இவற்றின் விரிந்த நூல்கள்;
ஆதிநூல் அனாதி அம லன் தருநூ லிரண்டும்;
ஆரண நூல் பொது, சைவம் அருஞ் சிறப்பு நூலாம்;
நீதியினால் உலகர்க்கும் சத்திநி பாதர்க்கும்
நிகழ்த்தியது நீள்மறையி னொழி பொருள், வே தாந்தத்
தீதில் பொருள் கொண்டுரைக்கும் நூல் சைவம்; பிறநூல்
திகழ்பூர்வம்; சிவாகமங்கள் சித்தாந்த மாகும்.

Page 22. Note 1 : Tiruvacakam, Verse 2 lines 19–22 :

கேவேட ராகிக் கெளிறது படுத்தும்
மாவே ட்டாகிய ஆகமம் வாங்கியும்
மற்றவை தம்மை மகேந்திரத் திருந்து
உற்ற ஐம்முகங்க ளாற் பணித் தருளியும்.

Page 23. Note 1 : Periyapuranam Verse 1904 :

வேத நெறி தழைத்தோங்க மிகு சைவத் துறை விளங்கப்
பூதபரம் பரைபொலியப் புனிதவாய் மலர்ந்தழுத
சீதவள வயற்புகலித் திருஞான சம்பந்தர்
பாத மலர் தலைக் கொண்டு திருத்தொண்டு பரவுவாம்.

Tirumantram 57 :

அஞ்சன மேனி அரிவையோர் பாகத்தன்
அஞ்சோ டிருபத்து மூன்றுள ஆகமம்
அஞ்சலி கூப்பி அறுபத் தறுவரும்
அஞ்சாமுகத்தில் அரும்பொருள் கேட்டதே.

Page 25. Manikkavachakar, Tiruvacakam 1 : line 4 :

ஆகம மாகி நின்று அண்ணிப்பான் தாள் வாழ்க.

Page 38. Manikkavacakar, Tiruvacakam Verse 420 :

அளிபுண் ணகத்துப் புறந்தோல் மூடி அடியே னுடை யாக்கை
புளியம் பழமொத் திருந்தேன்.

Page 42. Siddhiyar, Parapaksha Verse 293 :

பார்த்தனார் இரத மேறிப் பகைதனைப் பார்த்துச் சார்பைக்
கூர்த்த அம்பாலே எய்து கொன்றர சாளேன் என்னத்
தேர்த் தனி லிருந்து மாயை செய்து மால் சொல்லச் செய்யும்
வார்த்தை நூல் ஆக்கிக் கொண்டாய் புரங்கொல்நூல் மதித்
திடாயே.

Page 42. Tiruvacakam, Verse 16 :

யானேதும் பிறப்பஞ்சேன் இறப்பதனுக் கென் கடவேன்.

St. Appar 4, 81, 4 :

குனித்த புருவமும் கொவ்வைச் செவ்வாயும் குமிண் சிரிப்பும்
பனித்த சடையும் பவளம்போல் மேனியிற் பால் வெண்ணீ
றும்
இனித்தம் உடைய எடுத்த பொற் பாதமும் காணப் பெற்
றால்
மனித்தப் பிறவியும் வேண்டுவதே இந்த மா நிலத்தே.

Page 44. Srikantha bhashya; vide also Tirumantram 2397 :

வேதமோ டாகமம் மெய்யாம் இறைவன்நூல்
ஓதும் பொதுவும் சிறப்பும் என் றுள்ளன
நாதன் உரையவை. நாடில் இரண்டந்தம்
பேதம தென்பர் பெரியோர்க் கபேதமே.

Page 46. Note 2 : Sambandhar Devaram 3,23, 6 :

தொகுத்தவன் அருமறை அங்கம் ஆகமம்
வகுத்தவன் வளர்பொழிற் கூகம் மேவினான்
மிகுத்தவன் மிகுத்தவர் புரங்கள் வெந்தறச்
செகுத்தவன் உறைவிடந் திருவிற் கோலமே.

St. Appar Devaram 5, 15. 4 :

துணைவி லாமையில் தூங்கிருள் போர்களோடு
அணைய லாவ தெமக்கரி தேயெனா
இணையி லாஇடை மாமரு தில்லெழு
பணையி லாகமம் சொல்லும் தன் பாங்கிக்கே.

St. Sundarar Devaram 7.96.6, 7.100.81 :

அம்மானே ஆகம சீலர்க் கருள் நல்கும்
பெம்மானே பேரரு ளாளன் பிடவூரன்
தம்மானே தண்டமிழ் நூற்புல வாணர்க்கோர்
அம்மானே பரவையுண் மண்தளி யம்மானே.

அரவொலி ஆகமங்கள் அறிவார் அறி தோத்திரங்கள்
விரவிய வேதவொலி விண்ணெலாம் வந் தெதிர்ந்திசைப்ப
வரமலி வாணன் வந்து வழிதந்தெனக் கேறுவதோர்
சிரமலி யானை தந்தான் நொடித்தான் மலை உத்தமனே.

Page 46. Note 1 : Tirumantram 58 :

அண்ணல் அருளால் அருளும் சிவாகமம்
எண்ணில் இருபத்தெண் கோடிநூ றாயிரம்
விண்ணவர் ஈசன் விழுப்பம் உரைத்தனர்
எண்ணிநின் றப்பொருள் ஏத்துவன் நானே.

Page 46. Periya puranam : cf. the following lines from the verses therefrom :

சடையார் தாம் தந்த ஆகமப் பொருளை - மண்ணின் மிசைத் திருமூலர் வாக்கினால் தமிழ் வகுப்பக் - கண்ணிய அத்திருவருள் (3591); உள்ளுணர்வான ஞானம் முதலிய ஒரு நான்குண்மை தெள்ளு தீந்தமிழாற் கூறுந் திருமூலர் (3568).

பூசனைக்கு அங்கண் வேண்டும் நிபந்தம் ஆராய்ந்துளான், துங்க ஆகமம் சொன்ன முறைமையால் (101). உங்கள் நாயகனார் முன்னம் உரைத்த ஆகமநூல் மண்மேல், எங்கு மில்லாத தொன்று கொடுவந்தேன் இயம்ப என்றான் (478). எய்திய சீர் ஆகமத்தில் இயம்பிய பூசனைக் கேற்பக், கொய்த மலரும் புனலும் முதலான கொண்டணைந்தார் (784). செப்பிய ஆகம விதியால் ஆமுறையில் அர்ச்சனை செய்து; மன்னிய ஆகமப் படியால் மாமுனிவர் அருச்சித்து (801, 804). மெய்த்த ஆகம விதிவழி வேத காரணரை. நித்தல் பூசனை புரிந்து (1838). வளவன் தான் வேண்டும் நிபந்தம் பலவும் அரியணையின், மீது திகழ இருந்தமைத்தான் வேதாகம நூல் விதி விளங்க (1888).

ஆதரித்து ஆகமத்தால் அடிநிலை பாரித்து (4181), எண்ணிலாகமம் இயம்பிய இறைவர் தாம் விரும்பும்- உண்மையாவது பூசனை (1133). நாத, நீமொழிந்த ஆக மத்தின் இயல்பினால் உனை அர்ச்சனை புரியப் பொங்குகின்ற தென் ஆசை (1134). ஆகமத்திறனெலாம் தெரிய உள்ளவாறு கேட்டருளினான் உலகை ஆளுடையாள் (1132).

Page 47. Nambiyandar Nambi, Tiruthondar antadi Verse 74 :

நெறி வளர் சடையரைத் தீண்டிஇப் போதும் நீ டாகமத்தின்
அறிவால் வணங்கி அர்ச்சிப்பவர்.

St. Manikkavacakar Tiruvacakam 2.19-20 :

மன்னு மாமலை மகேந்திர மதனில்
சொன்ன ஆகமம் தோற்றுவித் தருளியும்.

Page 48. Saiva samaya neri , Verses 339–341 :

பலவாம் சிரு ட்டி, பகர் ஆகமமும்
பல விதமாய்த் தோன்றுமெனப் பார்

புனித தலத்திற் புனித னாகிப் படிக்க
இனிய இயலை இருந்து.

அலர்சூட் டுகஆ கமத்திற் குரவன்
மலரடிக்குஞ் சூட்டு மலர்.

Page 52. St. Appar Devaram 6.71, 5,

பெருக் காறு சடைக்கணிர்ந்த பெருமான் சேரும்
பெருங்கோயில் எழுபதி னோடெட்டும் மற்றும்.

(பெருங்கோயில்-மாடக்கோயில்).

St. Tirumangai alvar, Periya Tirumoli 6.6.8 :

முருக்கிலங்கு கனித் துவர்வாய்ப் பின்னை கேள்வன்
மன்னெல்லாம் முன்னவியச் சென்று வென்றிச்
செருக் களத்துத் திறலழியச் செற்ற வேந்தன்
சிரந்துணித்தான் திருவடி நும் சென்னி வைப்பீர்
இருக்கிலங்கு திருமொழிவாய் எண்தோ ளீசற்கு
எழில்மாடம் எழுபது செய் துலகம் ஆண்ட
திருக்குலத்து வளச்சோழன் சேர்ந்த கோயில்
திருநறையூர் மணிமாடம் சேர்மின்களே.

Page 52. Note 1 : St. Sundarar Devaram 7.39.10 :

முப்போதும் திருமேனி தீண்டுவார்க்கடியேன்.

Do. Note 2 : Nambiyandar Nambi Koil Tiruppanniyar viruttam 53 :

தில்லை மன்னனைத் தம்
சித்தகக் கோயில் இருத்தும் திறத் தாகமிகர்க் கல்லால்
புத்தகப் பேய்களுக் கெங்குற்றதோ அரன் பொன்னடியே.

Page 58. Note 1 : Tirumantiram, 519 :

பேர் கொண்ட பார்ப்பான் பிரான் தன்னை அர்ச்சிக்கில்
போர் கொண்ட வேந்தர்க்குப் பொல்லா வியாதியாம்
பார் கொண்ட நாட்டுக்குப் பஞ்சமும் ஆம் என்றே
சீர் கொண்ட நந்தி தெரிந்துரைத் தானே.

Page 60. Sambandhar Devaram 3, 54.3 :

ஆட்பா லவர்க்கருளும் வண்ணமும் ஆதி மாண்பும்
கேட்பான் புகில் அளவில்லை கிளக்க வேண்டா;
கோட்பா லனவும் வினையும் குறுகாமை எந்தை
தாட்பால் வணங்கித் தலை நின்றிவை கேட்க தக்கார்.

Page 84. Kachiyappa sivacharyar - Kanda puranam verse 4, 16, 24 :

எந்தை யுமை தேர்ந்திட இயம்பிய குமார
தந்திர நெறிப்படி தவாதறு முகற்கு
முந்திய குடங்கர் முதல் மூவகை யிடத்தும்
புந்தி மகிழ் பூசனை புரிந்தனர் பரிந்தே.

Glossary

Abhinna	not separate.
achara	observance.
advaita	non-dualism.
agama	Saiva scripture; revelation, scriptural authority.
agni karya	rituals in the fire.
ahimsa	non-violence.
ajnaa	the mystic nerve centre between the two eye brows, the sixth centre.
ajnana	ignorance.
akshara	letter.
akshata	grains of rice offered in worship or benediction.
anahata	the mystic nerve centre in the region of the heart, the fourth centre.
ananda	bliss.
anava	ego, ignorance.
anugraha	bestowal of grace.
anumana	inference.
apaurusheya	not made by man.
aradhana	worship.
archana	floral offering to a deity with namas.
artha	wealth, prosperity.
asana	seat, posture.
ashtanga	with eight parts.
ashtottara nama	108 names of a deity.
asrama	one of the four stages in life.
asrauta	not related to the veda.

atma puja	internal worship, worship of God within.
atmartha puja	worship for one's own welfare.
archaka	priest who performs the worship of a deity.
avudaiyar	the circular or square part of the Sivalinga in the middle of which the bana is placed.
Bahir puja	worship of God externally.
bhaga	part.
Bhagavan	the Lord God.
bhakta	devotee.
bhakti	devotion.
bhakti yoga	union through devotion.
bhashya	commentary on a religious treatise.
bhoga	enjoyment.
bhoga marga	path of enjoyment.
bija mantra	the 'seed' mantra special to the particular devata.
Brahman	the Absolute.
brahma randra	the aperture on the crown of the head through which the soul is considered to escape when leaving the body.
brahmanas	ritualistic treatises which are the second part of the vedas.
Charya	observance; the first pada in the Saiva sadhana.
cit	consciousness.
Darsana	school of philosophy.
deva bhasha	language of the gods.
devanagari	the familiar Sanskrit script.
Devaram	the songs of Sts. Tirujnanasambandhar, Appar and Sundarar collected into the first seven books of the Saiva canon.
devata	deity.
Devi	Sakti, the Consort of Siva (called by some the Mother-Goddess), Parvati or Uma.
dhaarana	meditative concentration.

dharma	righteousness, virtue, law, duty.
dhupa	fumigation with fragrant incense.
dhvaja	banner.
diksha	spiritual initiation.
dipa	lamp.
dvaita	dualism.
Ekatma veda	the doctrine that only the Atman exists.
Garbha griha	the Sanctum sanctorum in the temple where the main deity is installed.
Gayatri	a special mantra used in daily prayer to a particular deity.
gopura	the tall several tiered tower on the gateway of a temple.
grantha	(1) a script for Sanskrit, evolved in ancient Tamilnad. (2) a verse of Sanskrit in 32 vocalised letters. (3) a book.
guru	spiritual preceptor.
gurukkal	Sivacharya.
Havis	sacrificial food offering.
Ishta-devata	personal god.
Japa	repeating a mantra in prayer a number of times.
jiva	individual soul.
jnana	divine knowledge.
jnana kanda	vedic section dealing with divine knowledge.
jnana yoga	union through divine knowledge.
Kama	desire.
kamya karma	rite performed for satisfying an objective.
kamya puja	worship for satisfying an objective.
karma	action, the doctrive of an act resulting in its effects.
karma-kaṇḍa	vedic section dealing with religious rituals.
karma yoga	union through active service.
Kaumara	relating Kumara (Subrahmanya).
kriya	action, rite, the second pada in Saivasa-dhana.

kumbhaka	temporary stoppage of breath in the practice of pranayama.
Linga	symbol; the formless-form figure of Siva installed in the sanctum.
Mananam	memorization.
manipuraka	the nerve centre at the navel; the third centre.
mantra	sacred syllable or formula.
mata	religion.
maaya	illusion.
maaya vada	the doctrine that all that is perceived is illusion.
mochana	liberation.
moksha	release.
mudra	a gesture of the hand and fingers etc. having a mystic or erotic significance.
mukti	liberation.
muladhara	nerve centre in the pelvic region- the first centre.
mulagama	principal agama.
murti	manifest form of God.
Nagari	the familiar script for the Sanskrit language.
namah	end term of mantras; 'I salute'.
naimittika	occasional or periodical.
nigama	veda.
nighantu	metric lexicon of the past
nirvana	beatitude.
nitya	daily.
niyama	ablution and other disciplinary practices.
nuul	book.
Pada	part.
pancha	five.
pancha kritya	the five fold functions of Siva-creation, preservation, dissolution, obscuration and grace.

panchakshara	the five syllabled mantra for Siva; na-ma-si-va-ya.
paramatma	Absolute Self, the Supreme Being.
parartha puja	congregational worship.
paricheda	chapter.
parivara devata	a deity which is part of the retinue of the main deity of the temple.
pasa	bond.
pasu	the bound soul.
patala	section or chapter.
pati	Siva in Saivism.
pradakshina	circumambulation by the right.
pranava	the primordial sound, OM.
pranayama	exercise for the regulation of the breath, breath control.
pratyahara	withdrawing attention from objects.
pratyaksha	perception.
prayaschitta	expiatory ritual.
puja	ritulistic worship.
puraka	inhalation of the breath.
purana	book of religious legends.
purushartha	goal of life.
pushkarini	sacred temple tank.
Raja yoga	religious meditation involving no strain.
rechaka	exhalation of breath.
rshi	sage, seer.
Sadhaka	the learner, aspirant.
sadhana	means or path.
Saiva	of Siva, worshipper of Siva.
Saiva siddhanta	philosophy of the Saivas (in South India).
Sakta	worshipper or Sakti as the Supreme being.
Sakti (ni) pata	the falling of grace on one.
samadhi	perfect absorption of thought in God, the final step in the Ashtanga yoga.
samhara	dissolution.

samhita	sectarian scripture generally of the Vaishnava school.
samsara	the cycle of births and deaths.
sangraha	condensation.
sankhya	the earliest school of Indian philosophy said to be enunciated by Kapila.
sannyasi	ascetic, one who has renounced the world.
sastra	scripture.
sat	existent eternally.
sat-chit-ananda	True Existence, Intelligence and Bliss; the description of the Absolute.
Saura	related to the sun (Surya).
siddhi	attainment of supernatural power.
sivacharya	Siva brahmin; adi-saiva or gurukkal.
sloka	verse.
smartha	follower of the smriti; the average brahmin.
snapana	ceremonial bath of a deity performed with mantras.
srishti	creation.
sruti	veda handed down by word of mouth, revealed scripture.
sthala vrksha	sacred temple tree.
sthaapana	installation.
sthiti	preservation.
stotra	song of praise.
sushumna nadi	a mystic nerve passing through the spinal column.
sutra	aphorism.
svartha puja	worship for oneself, atmartha puja.
Tantra	sectarian scripture of the Sakta school, also generally the agamas.
tattva	the 36 reals in Saiva Siddhanta, real nature.
tirodhana	obscuration.

tranam	protection.
Upachara	honorific service.
upadesa	imparting of knowledge, initiation.
upagama	agama treatise derived from the principal agama.
upanishad	the end part of the Vedas, the Vedanta, being scripture on philosophy.
upasaka	one who performs inner worship.
upasana	inner worship.
Vaidika	of the veda.
Vaishnava	of Vishnu, worshipper of Vishnu.
vamachara	practices (often uncouth) of the left branch.
vama marga	the path of enjoyment of worldly pleasures.
varna	caste, Aryan division of society.
velalar	a landowning middle class in Tamilnad which was always vegetarian and was mostly worshipping Siva.
veda	Sacred book of divine knowledge.
vedanta	philosophy based on the end part (anta) of the Veda, the upanishat,
vidhi	rule.
vidya	right knowledge, jnana.
vimana	the ornamental superstructure on the garbha griha of a temple.
vira saiva	a later sect of Saivism which came into existence after Basava, 12th century.
vrata	religious penance.
Yajna, yaaga	vedic sacrific.
yama	the first step in Ashtanga yoga, stern personal discipline.
yantra	diagram.
yoga	union, thought control.
yogi	one who has achieved this, who strives for union with God.

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